

Fall 2009

Different Lattitudes, Different Attitudes: Educator Narratives of a Professional Development in Honduras

Polly Stewart Holder

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), and the [Other Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Holder, Polly Stewart, "Different Lattitudes, Different Attitudes: Educator Narratives of a Professional Development in Honduras" (2009). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 1039. <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/1039>

This dissertation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies, Jack N. Averitt College of at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

DIFFERENT LATTITUDES, DIFFERENT ATTITUDES: EDUCATOR NARRATIVES
OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

by

POLLY STEWART HOLDER

(Under the Direction of Delores Liston)

ABSTRACT

The curriculum studies field is marked by two significant concerns—the desire for a complex conversation about connection and diversity and the drive to address structural inequities. Drawing from the rich theoretical field of postpositivist realism and in the intellectually rigorous tradition of curriculum studies, this inquiry traces the socioemotional and pedagogical development of five educators before and after a brief professional development experience abroad as they explored what a pedagogy of hope (Freire, 2004; hooks, 2003) might look like.

These five participants traveled to Honduras during the summer of 2009 with Heifer Project International (HPI), a non-profit, non governmental community development organization as participants in their Study Tour for Educators. Heifer created the Study Tour, a nine day, intensive immersion into social justice topics, in order to support the ongoing process of critical engagement with the issues of hunger, poverty and care for the Earth. The long term objective of the professional development is increased personal and professional advocacy in home communities and schools.

This study explores topics of conscientization, solidarity and political advocacy. Through the narratives of these individuals, readers can experience the triumph of successful community development, the struggle for social justice and the burgeoning

questions of a complicated critical consciousness. This investigation draws from the work of Freire (2004; 2005), Cushner (2007), Moya (2000), Weiley (2008) and Mohanty (1997; 2000) to analyze the words and experience of these five individuals.

INDEX WORDS: Professional development, Study abroad, Advocacy, Social justice, Conscientization, Community development, Cross-cultural experience

DIFFERENT LATTITUDES, DIFFERENT ATTITUDES: EDUCATOR NARRATIVES
OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

by

POLLY STEWART HOLDER

B.A., Berry College, 2000

M.Ed., University of Georgia, 2005

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2009

© 2009

POLLY STEWART HOLDER

All Rights Reserved

DIFFERENT LATITUDES, DIFFERENT ATTITUDES: EDUCATOR NARRATIVES
OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

by

POLLY STEWART HOLDER

Major Professor: Delores D. Liston

Committee: Grigory Dmitriyev
Hsiu-Lien Lu
David Alley

Electronic Version Approved:
December 2009

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, who showed me the world, and to my mother, who taught me to care for it. May your examples lead my life as I take care of Lily Kate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Liston, who has been an excellent help and support to me throughout this dissertation process. I deeply appreciate your willingness to work with me and guide me during this time. I would also like to acknowledge my committee members – Dr. Dmitriyev, Dr. Lu and Dr. Alley. Your graciousness, attention to detail and commitment to my work made this possible.

To my husband, Gabel Holder: Many, many thanks for your patience and support throughout the entire grad school process. I would not have been able to do what I needed without your belief in me. Thank you for loving me through my grumpy, stressed, procrastinating, distracted times for the last eight years. I love you. I'm also very excited to finally be able to use those address labels—hope you don't mind.

To my family: Thank you, Dad, for your limitless belief in me, for always expecting more and pushing me to do my best. The high standards I have for myself are from you. Mom, I don't even know what to say to thank you for all you've taught and given me. I hope that I am half of the person and mother you are. Lee, I love you so much. I can always count on you to make me feel better and be there whenever I need someone. I am so lucky to have you in my life.

To those that made it possible for me to write: Thank you, Susan, for always encouraging me, being the best mother-in-law a girl could ask for, and taking care of Lily Kate. I don't know what I would have done without all of your help. Jaime, thank you for being the cocktail queen for when I needed to de-stress and watching LK before my deadlines.

Lucy: You get a section entirely to yourself. I can say, with complete confidence, that I would not have made it through this program without you. You are a true friend—endlessly patient, willing to be bothered and always encouraging. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Jeff, you're pretty special too.

To my participants: thank you for letting me share this experience with you and get to know a little bit too. As I re-read this work before I send it off, I am astounded at your gifts and strengths. Each of you illuminated something different for me. I had a blast!

I would also like to thank the Heifer staff who made it possible for me to go on the Study Tour: Tim Newman, Sarah Tourville, Jen Girtten, Courtney Hay, Kate Merrill, and Gloria Wheeler. I feel honored to know each of you and see all that Heifer does.

Lastly, to Lily Kate: Thank you for not crying too much when I was working on my computer. I love you so much. My greatest desire for you is that you will grow up with teachers like these and do the type of work that Heifer does.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
LIST OF TABLES.....	13
LIST OF FIGURES.....	14
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	15
Purpose of Study.....	16
Research Questions.....	16
Heifer Project International.....	17
Study Tour for Educators.....	20
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	27
Theoretical Framework.....	27
Defining and Justifying a Study Abroad.....	34
Socioemotional Transformations.....	42
Pedagogy and Classroom Practice.....	47
Problematizing Study Abroad.....	54
The Gap in the Literature.....	57

3.	METHODOLOGY.....	59
	A Qualitative Apologia.....	59
	Defining Case Studies.....	60
	Concerns and Limitations of Case Studies.....	62
	Setting of Professional Development.....	65
	Participant Selection.....	67
	Informant Profiles.....	68
	Michel.....	68
	Hannah.....	72
	Nicole.....	76
	Jayne.....	79
	Sherry.....	82
	Participant Interviews.....	87
	Artifacts.....	90
	Data Management and Analysis.....	91
	Ethical Considerations.....	91
	Informed Consent.....	94
	Pseudonyms.....	95

	Limitations and Challenges.....	95
	My Involvement.....	96
4.	EMERGENT THEMES.....	98
	Seminal Moments.....	102
	<i>La Solidaridad</i>	113
	Conscientization	127
	Advocacy.....	139
5.	CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	152
	A Response to Phillion et al.....	152
	Findings.....	162
	Limitations.....	165
	Final Thoughts.....	166
	REFERENCES.....	167
	APPENDICES.....	182
A.	Study Tour Application.....	182
B.	Heifer Curricula Overviews.....	186
C.	Email sent to grantees.....	190
D.	IRB Paperwork.....	191
E.	Interview Protocol.....	201

F.	Michel Rubric.....	204
G.	Hannah Lesson Plan.....	208
H.	Nicole Lesson Plan.....	210

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Study Tour Itinerary	22
Table 4.1: Descriptive Summary of Participants	84

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Pre-departure activity in Houston.....	20
Figure 2: Michel and Sherry on a Site Visit	21
Figure 3: Reflexive Journaling.....	23
Figure 4: Moving around the community in San Nicolás.....	24
Figure 5: Urban Tegucigalpa	64
Figure 6: Rural Honduras.....	64
Figure 7: Case study write up on Michel’s course page	69
Figure 8: Michel’s family’s cabin.....	70
Figure 9: Journey	72
Figure 10: Image from “Hungry Planet”	76
Figure 11: Nicole’s class composting project.....	76
Figure 12: Jayne’s class blog	79
Figure 13: Sherry dancing.....	83
Figure 14: Solidarity	111
Figure 15: Eating in the Communities	118
Figure 16: Discussions of Poverty	152

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2007, I can remember feeling the sun beat down on my back as I sat in the semi-circle and listened to the Heifer recipient speak. We were surrounded by lush vegetation, the call of birds and the occasional insect in rural Honduras. The valley was rimmed with mountains and the half-finished concrete block house stood proudly on the rise of a hill. The man's face was a road map of a life lived hard yet well; lines were etched into his checks and brow. Wearing his finest—worn and mended—clothes neatly pressed, he was to speak about the changes in his life that came about after participating in Heifer International's community development program to the visiting group of North American teachers. Looking at us one by one, he offered his thanks. "Thank-you," he said, "for looking at me and seeing a human being. When I reach out my hand, it is not for a hand-out, but for you to take and for us to walk together." I do not know if I can explain how humbling his profuse thanks were and how meaningful they remain. He had walked over half a day to catch the *combi* (the crowded public taxi) that would take him to come meet us and would return later that evening to do the un-ending cycle of chores that marks sustenance farming.

In a world where over 30,000 children die a day from hunger ("Hunger Facts," 2006) and 134 million children between the ages of 7 to 18 have never been to school ("New Study," 2003), combating hunger and poverty is more than a list of liberal should-do's, it is a moral imperative. I believe deeply that each of us has a responsibility to the other – to learn about, respect and work for the benefit of other people in our local and global communities. As someone who believes passionately in the libratory and radical

possibilities of education, my desire for a more just world manifests itself in my life as the opportunity to teach adolescents about issues of hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. My hope for this study is to explore how a group of educators from the United States can open themselves up to become empowered agents of change via an experience abroad; my investment in this topic comes from my own history, beliefs and life.

My childhood was colored by my mother's example of community and personal engagement. She raised my brother and me with the belief that each of us has a responsibility to ourselves and others to improve our worlds by growing spiritually and working physically. From my girlhood home to my professional and academic career, I have followed her example by trying to better my understanding of social justice topics in order to equip myself to teach and live in an equitable manner. Both my parents influenced me greatly – my mother with her habit of volunteering and my father when took me on my first international trip when I was ten years old. That trip opened my eyes to the fact that there are many different ways to be. It also created an inveterate traveler. Twenty years after my first trip, I can look back over two different study abroad experiences, three international professional developments, two mission trips and numerous vacations and see how those experiences have helped me contextualize and deepen my understanding of social justice issues. Those moments abroad have also helped me redefine my sense of self, advocacy and hope.

I have chosen to work as a teacher. I believe that it is both an avocation and a vocation. Education, for me, represents a concrete opportunity to address social justice concerns locally while awakening individuals to their own potential. This research draws

on my history and present to explore the idea of a pedagogy of hope (Freire, 2004; hooks, 2003). My desire was to present an inquiry that other practitioners could read so they could deepen their own sense of advocacy. Freire (2004) notes that it is “the task of the progressive educator, through a serious, correct political analysis, to unveil opportunities for hope” (p. 3).

This study traces the socioemotional and pedagogical development of five educators before and after a brief professional development experience abroad as they explored what a pedagogy of hope might look like. The following overarching questions guided my qualitative inquiry into this topic:

1. In what ways do the informants view themselves as agents of change before and after their time in Honduras?
2. How does this experience change their ability to address issues of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation?

I was particularly interested in the idea of educators as agents of change in their personal and professional lives. For this work, I have defined agent of change as an individual who has a high level of advocacy professionally and personally. This manifests itself professionally as an individual who, in their school community, is constantly encouraging students to empower themselves about social justice issues. Outside of the field of education, an agent of change is engaged in their communities and politically.

The professional development experience in this research was the Study Tour for Educators by Heifer Project International; the Study Tour was created in 2005 to support teachers as they embrace pedagogies of hope and change in their classrooms when

addressing issues of hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. Heifer Project International (HPI) is a non-governmental, non-profit aid organization that was begun in 1944 with the goal of sustainable, long-term community development. Heifer is not a relief organization; instead, HPI partners with community organizations and leadership to achieve long range goals of ecologically respectful economic growth. Heifer's mission focuses on ending hunger, combating poverty and caring for the Earth via seven initiatives: agroecology, animal well-being, gender equity, HIV/AIDS awareness/assistance, microenterprise, urban agriculture, and youth programs (www.heifer.org). Heifer's approach towards development equips individuals and communities with the training and resources necessary to obtain a sustainable source of food and income and manage that source in an ecologically appropriate manner. The original gifts given by "Heifers for Relief" (the antecedent of HPI) were cows, hence the name. Today, HPI offers 30 different kinds of livestock, trees, or seeds to project partners as they work towards long term, sustainable development (www.heifer.org).

Instead of a top-down approach, HPI is entirely a grass-roots organization. All country staff are from the areas they serve, and to meet their goals of community development, Heifer partners with other, existing humanitarian groups – preferably indigenous to an area, but they will also partner with larger NGOs such as Save the Children – to achieve their goals. Communities who desire to become project partners – HPI's vocabulary for groups and/or individuals that receive aid – must go through an application and training process before receiving any life stock or seeds. Because many of the communities they serve are illiterate or unfamiliar with a formal application process, Heifer country staff will guide community leaders through the grant process.

HPI believes that application process is essential because it allows communities to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and relies heavily on Freire's ideas of conscientization (2005). Heifer's policy is to never tell communities what they need, but instead, to ask how they can be helpers as individuals reach their own goals.

Once the application process is complete and a project is funded, communities begin the somewhat lengthy process of receiving training. Before the first gifts of livestock or seeds are given, Heifer will have already been in a community anywhere from 6 months to one year, (outside of the application process) giving training and supporting the community as they develop the skills to care for themselves and the gift they will be given. HPI considers this training process integral to long term project success/sustainability as well as goals of gender equity. Field staff offer training on everything from how to manage a business for individuals receiving microloans to what medications are needed to keep a hive of bees healthy. Once individuals receive a gift of life stock, seeds, microloan or training, they become responsible for passing on the gift (where an individual or community has to present to another individual or community something of the same value as they were already given – a flock of chicks, a pregnant cow, the same amount of money given in a microloan, etc.) This concept of passing on the gift is the most significant of Heifer's twelve cornerstones.

These cornerstones are the framework guiding HPI's practice and are the reasons that HPI is so protean, sustainable and successful. They are: passing on the gift, accountability (individuals and communities must reach established goals), sharing and caring, sustainability and self-reliance, improved animal management, nutrition and income, gender and family focus, genuine need and justice, improving the environment,

full participation (of all family/community members, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, educational background, etc.), training and education, and spirituality (as appropriate to whichever group) (www.heifer.org). HPI believes that these guiding structures provide the scaffolding to achieve socially just and economically appropriate development. Throughout the process, the goal is to leverage existing community knowledge and strengths while equipping individuals for advocacy by using the cornerstones above.

Heifer's goal is to end their initial involvement with a community within 5 to 6 years. By that point, HPI hopes that their cornerstones have become community values so that community members will continue to pass on the gift long after they are gone. Heifer believes at this time that groups should be well versed in advocacy and that bonds committing communities to each other and to development should be well established. However, communities can re-apply for a different type of project help at the end of the first term. For example, in northern Honduras, a community that originally received gifts of livestock ten years ago has reapplied and is now working with microloans to establish a small, marketable milk and cheese business.

HPI began nearly seventy years ago with one man organizing the original donation of 16 cows to families in Puerto Rico. Today, 10.4 million families can trace improvements in their life to Heifer's work as direct beneficiaries or recipients of a gift pass on (S. Tourville, personal communication, July 22, 2009). In fiscal year 2008, HPI ran 869 projects in 27 U.S. states and 53 different countries (www.heifer.org). Roughly fifteen percent of Heifer's \$113 million budget in 2008 was spent for educational programming (Heifer Project International, 2009).

The educational department has two different foci. One arm of HPI's educational programming concentrates on providing information and resources to the various projects in the United States and around the world on topics relevant to their community development goals such as basic veterinary care, green energy production and use, heritage seeds and planting practices, how to manage a small business, etc. The other division of HPI's educational focus is centered on teachers and students in the United States with the stated goal of helping individuals "to better understand global hunger and poverty – and come away with a re-energized determination to be part of the solution to world poverty" (Heifer Project International, 2009c, ¶1). HPI views understanding global hunger and poverty as part of a larger democratic education focused on sustainable human development. According to Hufford (2008), sustainability is "living within the bounds of the regenerative, assimilative, and carrying capacities of the planet" (p. 111). HPI seeks to "enable children and students to understand and live out their ecological interdependence with others and the natural world [by supporting] educators to enable and empower students to act collectively through a community based experiential curriculum" (Hufford, 2008, p. 112).

HPI created the Study Tour for Educators with this premise in mind to achieve the long term goal of helping equip teachers to better understand the complex issues of hunger, poverty, and care for the Earth so that they may in turn "speak and teach proficiently on the most pressing issues of our time" (Heifer Project International, 2009b, ¶1). For the Study Tour examined here, educators were recruited via HPI's website via an application process. (See Appendix A for the grant application.) Of the 120 applications received, a committee of five then narrowed down the field to the final 30. Of these, they

grouped into two different sections of 15 each. My informants and I traveled with Group I to Honduras from June 9-20, 2009. The second group traveled a week later.

Michel, one of my informants, was an exception to the application process; he had an ongoing contact with HPI central office staff. Although he did submit an application, his space on the tour was essentially a foregone conclusion due to his strong background related to the topics explored on the Study Tour as well as his connection to the education department. In addition, at the beginning of the application process, Michel was in the design phase of setting up a study tour for his students to take place during the summer of 2010, and both HPI and Michel wanted Michel to experience a study tour before venturing much further in the planning process.

The aim of the Study Tour was to mature teachers' social justice viewpoints so that they will be moved to social action, rather than merely demonstrating an intellectual understanding of equity (Johnson-Hunter & Risku, 2003). The entire experience was designed to develop critical consciousness, and it follows Weiley's (2008) framework for global and indigenous learning. Weiley is careful to differentiate between an experience where the "participant, who is often privileged, is usually the focus...and the emphasis of the project is what they can glean from the situation...[from] *needy people*" (2008, p. 307, emphasis in original) and liberatory service-learning which is

within the social justice and social responsibility paradigm, [and includes] an intrinsic belief [that it is not our job] to work solely towards a quick solve in the immediate...but toward eliminating the root of the problem so to eradicate the problem itself (Weiley, 2008, p. 312).



Figure 1: Pre-departure activity in Houston

The grantee educators who participated in Heifer’s Study Tour began their experience in Houston, Texas, where participants learned about Heifer programs and general hunger and poverty information. The pre-departure professional development

also included team building activities and an overview of Heifer’s elementary and middle school curricula; descriptions of these resource kits can be found in Appendix B. These two days in Houston were meant to establish the beginning of continuous reflection, which Weiley (2008) defines as essential for interpolating global and indigenous learning. After this brief time, the group transitioned to Honduras.

Honduras offered a setting that took participants “out of their comfort zones and place[d] them in surroundings and with people whom they might normally avoid, whether consciously or unconsciously” (Weiley, 2008, p. 316), which is a significant piece in experiential learning. Putnam and Borko (2000) argue that “situating learning experiences for teachers outside of the classroom may be important - indeed essential - for powerful learning...[these experiences] give rise to different kinds of knowing” (p. 6). In the evenings after community visits, Heifer staff led reflection and debriefing time to help participants begin to understand, extrapolate and then internalize new information gleaned from being in Honduras.

The other key component of this professional development that makes it so unique is that the participant grantees controlled a significant portion of the reflection

time along with Heifer staff. By sharing best practices, favorite classroom activities and individual understandings, participants were able to explore how to make connections themselves and share those connections with their students. Sleeter, Hughes, Meador, Whang, Rogers, Blackwell, Laughlin, and Peralta-Nash (2005) strongly encourage teachers to engage in candid dialogues that critically explore significant issues; this, in fact, is one of the most efficacious consciousness building exercises that teachers can do. Baldwin, Buchanan and Rudisill (2007) note that “consciousness rising...in community settings introduces...teachers to the concept of teaching for social justice” (p. 317).

During the days, participants visited HPI community development sites in both urban and rural settings and talked with Heifer recipients.

Although each day was different, most days in country involved a drive out to a rural community. Once there, Heifer field staff and project partners presented about the types of work they do. Some presentations were more polished – two project partners had LCD projectors – and some consisted of a handful of individuals reading from notes carefully written on the back of re-used paper.

Community leaders were presented and given the opportunity to talk about their goals of development and how they chose and accomplished the work they have done. After the meeting, Study Tour grantees then walked to different houses around the community to meet with individuals that have received livestock or seeds from Heifer. Grantees were allowed full access to the communities they visited. In several communities, the grantees also shared a



Figure 2: Michel and Sherry on a site visit

meal with the project partners. By listening and sharing stories, time, food and strength, both grantees and community members grew.

Table 1: Study Tour Itinerary

Date	Activity	Lodging, Logistics	Responsible Person	Remarks
June 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival, Tegucigalpa CO 756, 11:39 • 2pm Orientation • 3:30pm MA, historian 	20 min trip to Villa Gracia lodge Lunch & dinner Overnight at Lodge	GW	M. A. is a renowned Honduran historian
June 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 Mini Workshop on Development & poverty • 1pm Visit downtown Tegucigalpa, • Tour city, cathedral, art museum 	3 meals at Lodge, Overnight at Lodge	GW/TW	Crafts exhibit at Lodge, silver and wood products
June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 Heifer talk, visit office • Visit project ADEPES en Pespire, Choluteca (3) 	Lunch at project, Overnight at Lodge	MM GW SU	part of the Food Sovereignty Project in southern Honduras, to visit El Papalón or Agua Agria
June 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7am leave for western Honduras • Visit project with Heifer partner COMIPRONIL (6) 	Overnight in Gracias, Lempira, Hotel Via Ada, 4 hours travel to project, 2 hours to hotel, travel lunch	GW, MG	Visit a community, Lenca Indigenous people
June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am leave for project visit with Fundación Puca (1) 	Overnight in Copan Ruins	GW, EP, MA	Visit project in Mangual
June 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am leave for project with Heifer partner, DIA (1) 	Overnight in Copan Ruins	GW	Visit project in Berlin, Plancitos
June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am Visit Mayan Ruins, museum • 1:30 pm travel to San Pedro Sula 	Lunch in Copan Ruins, Overnight in San Pedro Sula, travel time 3.5 hrs.	GW, NM	Hotel in SPS, Gran Hotel Sula
June 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure, CO 759, 8am 		GW, NM	Leave for airport 5:30am

These activities, accompanied by nighttime reflection, allowed teachers to begin to examine the possibilities for social justice that arise when individuals work together beyond the comfort zone of their coursework, their classrooms, and their own educational background. The activities provided a framework as they began to grapple with “systems and work in solidarity for social justice beyond their courses, classrooms and educational experiences” (Weiley, 2008, p. 340).

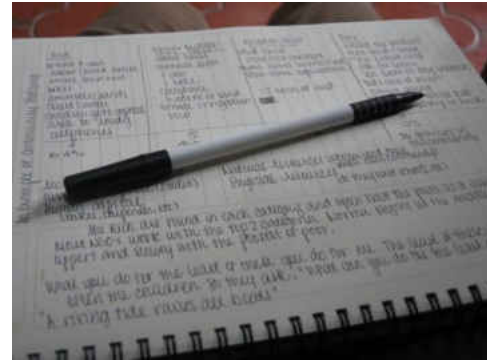


Figure 3: Reflective journaling

The professional development lasted nine days, but the unique strength of the Study Tour is how it continues to influence its participants beyond their time in country. The purpose of this dissertation study is to allow the educator informants to give voice to their experience and explore how they conceptualize themselves as advocates regarding hunger, poverty and environmental degradation.

A central concern of professional developments like this or immersion into community development is the idea of staging. However, as a participant-observer, I observed that the educators on the Study Tour were allowed complete freedom to move around the different communities they visited. While, undoubtedly, the recipients chosen to host participants in their homes were the most successful members of a community, various community members came to the meetings and meals and interacted with Study Tour grantees. None of the site visits, community gatherings or project partner overviews were closed for only selected attendees. In addition, Study Tour participants questioned community members about various successes and failures. Responses ranged from frank

to evasive based on the personalities questioned. Although overall, responses were very positive regarding HPI and its work, I (and my informants) felt that it was due to the efficacy of the program and not related to a performance from the project partners.



Figure 4: Moving around the community in San Nicolás

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is postpositivist realism. I am a White, female, middle class teacher from the South who grew up in a rural, largely racially homogenous community. These identities represent significant strikes against me when it comes to being able to connect to or understand the majority of students in schools today. Educational researchers and theorists echo this concern because White, middle class teachers often fail to understand or appreciate the diversity that populates their classrooms (Banks & McGee Banks, 2001; Delpit, 2006; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Nieto, 2004). Sleeter (2000) argues that this is due to white privilege, which is endemic in public schools, and that most teachers, while well-meaning, fail to understand structural inequities. Delpit (2006) notes that students from minority groups – black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American – currently make up approximately 30 percent of the population of school age children. Conversely, the number of teachers from the same minority groups may soon fall below 10 percent. Hooks (1994) describes her schooling experience as an African American where “the vast majority of our [teachers] lacked basic communication skills, they were not self actualized, and they often used the classroom to enact rituals of control that were about domination and the unjust exercise of power” (p. 5). Even though this was her past, hooks sought something more. Like hooks, I reject this idea of schooling. I believe that teaching is a “vocation that is sacred” (hooks, 1994, p. 13) and can be “against oppression and subjugation... against exploitation, unfairness, and unkindness... toward freedom, for enlightenment and

awareness....[for the] protection of the weak, cooperation, generosity, compassion and love” (Ayers, 2004, p. 18). However, before we can teach against oppression and towards enlightenment, we must be able to connect with and understand our students.

Knowledge, understanding and identity are extremely troubled and charged concepts. Moya (2000) describes the debate over identity as a critical and very controversial topic in literary and cultural studies. The conflict about identity has legitimate roots in historical concerns, and today “concepts like experience and identity...[are seen as] similarly indeterminate and hence epistemically unreliable...[and therefore] meaning is inescapably relative” (Moya, 2000, p. 5). While I agree that the relationship between identity and truth is not a straightforward one, like Moya, I do not want to be paralyzed by a philosophical milieu that questions reality, truth and identity to the extent that these concepts are reduced to word games. If meaning and reality are inescapably relative, what moral or political imperative is there to alleviate hunger? Or work to end poverty?

Postmodernism represents one pole of current philosophical debate. Woods (1999) catalogues the diverse manifestations of postmodernism. However, he notes that there are certain shared characteristics even among the various forms that postmodernism takes: a deep skepticism about “an all-encompassing rationality” and the negation of “metanarratives...which is a suspicion of any discursive attempts to offer a global or universalist account of existence” (p. 10). The other end of the philosophical spectrum essentializes identity and truth down to concrete, inflexible and determined categories, and this standpoint has largely been rejected as incomprehensible in theory and politically destructive (Moya, 2000). However, only a fool would deny that how we define ourselves and how others see us affects the outcomes of our life, including our choice of spouse,

our educational and employment chances, and where we decide to live (Moya, 2002). Between these binaries is a philosophy that would address both the socially constructed nature of identity and the reality of the way goods and services are distributed according to identity categories. Postpositivist realist theory offers balance between these two viewpoints. Via experience, contemplation and connection, it is possible to know; “humans can develop reliable knowledge about their world” (Moya, 2000, p. 13) that provides a basis for social action. This knowing/connection is not some blindly accepted opinion, but rather, it is based upon well established theories. It is possible for me to connect—not easy to do so, but possible. With this connection with Others, I can learn to “define and reshape [my] values and commitments” and move beyond a situated and fixed identity as White, middle class teacher (Mohanty, 2000, p. 43).

The idea of connection via theory is a significant one. According to postpositivist Realist theory, theoretical knowledge about the world is acquired by examining a range of beliefs, judging those for their explanatory power, and affording marginalized groups epistemic privilege. Moya (2000b) defines epistemic privilege as the “special advantage [that marginalized groups have] with respect to possessing or acquiring knowledge about how fundamental aspects of our society (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) operates to sustain matrices of power” (pp. 80-81). Postpositivist realist theory problematizes dominant notions of power and knowledge by interposing and validating the points of view of traditionally marginalized groups through epistemic privilege.

Epistemic privilege alongside the “making of meaning through a synthesis of knowledge and perspectives” (Grobman, 2003, p. 208) is how postpositivist argues that it is possible to develop a wider ranging explanatory theory regarding knowledge. This

explanatory theory is, in short, knowledge judged legitimate by determining whether it is a satisfactory explanation for the social phenomena around us while being careful to interpolate the experiences of oppressed groups. Sánchez (2006) offers a more detailed description of this theory; it is an

account of identity formation that meets explanatory adequacy by examining identity in direct relation to social structures, noting how social structures configure, condition, limit and constrain agency and never forgetting that agency has the potential to transform social structures...[this theory is] a critical and self-reflexive critique of identity (Sánchez, 2006, p. 32).

The concept of self reflection is a significant one. Postpositivist realism does not believe that knowledge is a fixed entity; instead, our understanding of what is knowable/true is constantly being enhanced. Postpositivist realism sees that “the theory-mediatedness of knowledge, far from inhibiting our understanding of social relations, allows us to evaluate such knowledge” (Hau, 2000, pp. 152-153). Unlike essentialism, postpositivist realism argues that reality/identities cannot easily be known and fit into simple categories. Unlike postmodernism, postpositivist realism posits that knowledge is possible. By granting that “the knowledge that [we] construct within [admittedly] temporal and transcendent contexts is real” (Gilpin, 2006, p. 11), postpositivist realism resolves the tension between these two viewpoints regarding knowledge. Postpositivist realism’s epistemological viewpoint provides a workable “thesis about *how* we can know as well as *what* can be known” (Alcoff, 2001, p. 835, emphasis in original).

To further help define postpositivist realist theory, Moya (2000b) outlines the six defining tenets. They are that: (a) the social categories of identity will be related to the

experiences an individual will have, (b) identity will “influence, but not entirely determine, the formation of [an individual’s] cultural identity” (p. 82), (c) there are possibilities for “error” and “accuracy” when “interpreting things that happen to us” due to the “cognitive component [of] identity” (p. 83), (d) certain identities will have “greater epistemic value” for an individual “because they can more adequately account for the social categories constituting an individual’s social location” (pp. 83-84), (e) our ability to correctly understand our world hinges upon “our ability to acknowledge and understand the social, political, economic and epistemic consequences of our *own* social location” (p. 85, emphasis mine), and (f) the struggles of marginalized and oppressed groups are “fundamental to our ability to understand the world more accurately” (p. 86). These six characteristics of postpositivist realism are what make it a protean, progressive and applicable theoretical framework.

Although there are those in my community, school and university who are comfortable as cynics, I truly and deeply believe that we—as teachers and individuals—do have a responsibility toward our world and fellow humans. Becoming a teacher/researcher/actualized person is knowing that:

education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable (Arendt, 1993, p. 196)

Loving the world begins with loving and understanding my students, who come from a range of backgrounds, experiences and identities. My goal for my dissertation research

is to track the ways that through experience abroad with HPI, teachers can assume this responsibility for change and use it in their classrooms.

Postpositivist realist theory is uniquely suited to this study because it allows for the transformative power of experience. Going abroad and seeing that truth and reality are something that can be measured and therefore shared with others (Mohanty, 2000) gives us room for growth. We can deepen our understandings of ourselves by forming relationships with systematically and historically oppressed groups via epistemic privilege. Where post-modernism reduces identity down to unsharable units and pragmatism focuses only on action, post-positivist realist theory argues for cerebral action via learning from those that are oppressed.

Postpositivist realist theory allows me to recognize and capitalize on my own experience as I work for social justice; it is a means by which it is possible to recognize that my experiences and the experiences of others are similarly connected, while at the same time acknowledging that my experiences are singular and unique. It is possible to engage in a critical dialogue with others because postpositivist realism does not offer facile, defined nor nebulous definitions of identity. This is a conversation that we need to have “if we are to create truly multicultural spaces in which to learn, teach, and live...[because] the all-or-nothing stance of the competing identity paradigms has created theoretical enclaves engaged in verbal warfare, while failing to facilitate cross theoretical understandings” (Gilpin, 2006, p. 16).

I believe these cross-theoretical (and cultural) understandings are important. In fact, they are the only way that we can make a difference in our worlds. Postpositivist realism offers a framework and an impetus to make a difference on both personal and

political levels; it not only allows for social change but demands it. Postpositivist realism provides the lens through which we can view multiculturalism as an integral part of a justice theory in societies that are plagued by entrenched and persistent cultural inequities (Mohanty, 1997). I, as well as a host of other theorists, believe that the society in which I live is a flawed one with deep divisions, injustice and discrimination. I seek to address those chasms in my academic, personal and professional work, and I believe that postpositivist realist theory provides a framework to do so.

To close with a quote that I believe sums up this argument well, postpositivist realist theory

does not urge us to give up the job of interpreting the world (in the interest of changing it) but instead points out how the possibility of interpreting our world accurately depends fundamentally on our coming to know what it would take to change it, on our identifying the central relations of power and privilege that sustain it and make the world what it is (Mohanty, 2000, p. 41)

Literature Review

To provide a contextual underpinning for the current study, I reviewed the available literature on the topic of study, experience, and/or professional development abroad. During this process, a body of work emerged that combined study abroad and education for social change. Concepts from the fields of critical theory that rely heavily on Freire's work on conscientization are found alongside pedagogical content delivery concerns. At this convergence, there is a nascent yet burgeoning body of work by some educators and theorists that seeks to unite experiential encounters (like a study abroad) with discussions about power, hunger, poverty and environmental degradation.

Throughout this section, I will use the terms study, experience, and professional development abroad in accordance with the original author's phraseology. For the rest of my work, I will continue using those words interchangeably. The purpose of this literature review is to investigate how these different points of view come to bear on the research at hand and what gaps exist that my study can fill. As such, this review will focus on the following areas: (a) why a study/experience abroad is important and how to define that experience, (b) how study/experience abroad changes participants, specifically teachers, socio-emotionally, and (c) how study/experience abroad directly affects content delivery for educators

The Study Abroad: Definitions and Ramifications

The philosophical heart of a teacher's decision to study abroad is the recognition that a global understanding/mindset is essential in education (and I would argue life). Sadly, this dimension is often overlooked in traditional K-12 schooling amidst the pressures of standardized testing and the mind numbing sameness of a pre-scripted curriculum. The narrowness of a global perspective in American education results in statistics such as eighty percent of secondary students do not know that the largest democratic country in the world is India (Levine, 2005). Levine (2005) also found that, in comparison to young adults in eight other industrialized countries, young Americans rank next to last in their knowledge of social science topics, particularly geography and current affairs. He links this directly to the fact that the vast majority of teachers do not get the opportunity to study abroad. This is reflective of the general population, of whom almost seventy five percent of United States citizens have not traveled outside their country, and do not plan to do so (Tevlin, 2007). Kisko (2007) adds that "teachers whose life

experiences are primarily within a sixty-mile/hundred kilometer radius of their homes can no longer be offered to the schools of the world” (p. v). Experience outside the sixty mile radius is essential because it allows an individual the ability to interpolate, in an organic way, new information that is relative, relational and interactive (Eng, 2008).

Teachers not only lack geographical and political knowledge, but they also fail to develop an understanding of the sociopolitical and economic forces that have shaped the developing world. This is hardly surprising, since American educational systems concentrate on creating consumers and workers for a market focused economy rather than individuals that think deeply about world issues (Apple, 1995; Giroux, 2003; McDonald, 1995). This paucity of thought reflects the dominant culture, and it is found in first-world assumptions that poverty and hunger are tied to personal choices rather than systemic inequities (Apple, 1995; Giroux, 2003; Wu, 2007). From the comfort of our privileged positions in the developed world, we, in the United States, have the luxury to forget that people across the globe are in crisis – near-catastrophic situations related to the economy, ecology and global politics (Wu, 2007).

In a time where the very wealthy are enjoying unprecedented (and to many, unimaginable) prosperity and the gap between rich and poor has widened, it has become even more imperative for teachers to inform themselves about world events and in turn to begin to address those issues with students. Wu (2007) outlines some of startling statistics about global development and poverty that have been ignored as

the neo-liberal market economy focuses exclusively on goods and services that can be exchanged on the market for a profit. It factors out ‘non-marketable’ goods and services, such as those provided by women’s domestic and reproductive labor

and subsistence labor in general as well as environmental services, rendering such work statistically invisible and worthless (p. 19)

Evidence of this crisis can be found in the Gini coefficient – a measure of the inequality of incomes – which showed in 2002 that thirty three percent of the world’s population benefits from all of the income (Wu, 2007). Concerns about inequality are echoed in the following statistics about economic globalization from 1980-2000. First, with the exception of the highest performing group of countries, the life expectancy of the population fell in all countries during the period of globalization. In fact, the life expectancy of women was more adversely affected than that of men (Weisbrot, Baker, Kraev, & Chen, 2001). Second, during the time period of 1980-2000, the reduction in the rate of infant and child mortality slowed when compared with the previous 20 year period with the lowest groups experiencing the largest drop (Weisbrot, Baker, Kraev & Chen, 2001). In regards to education and literacy goals, enrollment, growth, and public spending on education saw less growth for most countries in 1980-2000 than 1960-1980 (Weisbrot, Baker, Kraev & Chen, 2001).

While these figures may seem shocking but distant—relics of the developing world and not present in American highly industrialized society—they are anything but that. Statistics for students of color who live in urban neighborhoods and White students who experience rural poverty mirror the facts above. For example, within a 30 minute drive from my house to Athens, GA, twenty five percent of children live in poverty as defined by the state and, according to more generous poverty assessment measures, Clarke County’s poverty rate is the 5th highest in the nation (Partners for a Prosperous Athens, 2006).

Presently, a driving concern in education is how to support a connection between teachers and students when they do not look, sound or live like each other - the National Education Association (2003) found that the majority of teachers (ninety percent) were White with five percent of teachers being Black and the last five percent for all other minorities – and awakening a consciousness about global issues is also awakening about local ones. Study or experience abroad for teachers has been found as one of the most efficacious ways to develop a sense of empathy and awareness about issues such as poverty, hunger and environmental degradation (Cushner, 2007).

The importance of creating this sense of empathy is supported by extensive pedagogical literature; when educating with this focus, a sense of the global as connected with the familiar can be taught. It is imperative to do so because students increasingly view themselves as “anti-political, privately accumulating individuals” (Apple, 1995, p. 29) whose actions are isolated from and do not influence their larger world; when in reality, every action - be it economic, social or political - has an effect on others. Education can be the proverbial light in the consumer-driven isolated dark that our students experience; “educators must link learning to social change, recognizing every sphere of social life is open to political action” (Giroux, 2003, p. 53). Whether it is the shoes they buy or the political choices they make, every individual has a choice for agency and for the opportunity to take steps to end hunger and poverty. When education loses itself from simply fact knowledge/bubbles to fill in on a test and transforms itself into a critical exercise in how each of us is connected to the other, it becomes “a pedagogy of all people in the process of liberation” (Freire, 2005, p. 54).

This has been a concern in teacher educators since the time of Dewey. Today, thirty four years later after Hanvey wrote his essay, *An Attainable Global Perspective* (1975), teacher preparatory or professional development programs who offer study/experience abroad continue to be influenced by its five core tenets of the dimensions of a global perspective.

Hanvey (1975) argued the first step to developing a global perspective is fostering a sense of perspective consciousness. Perspective consciousness is the awareness that everyone in the world does not have the same point of view as an individual – even to the extent that others have an extremely different perspective. In addition, perspective consciousness requires an individual to recognize that their own point of view has been shaped by both tacit and explicit forces that influence an individual in conscious and subconscious ways.

The second stage of global consciousness (Hanvey, 1975) is state of the planet awareness. This is a general attentiveness to the conditions in the developed and developing world including demographics, policy, politics, available resources, scientific advances, legal matters, armed and ideological conflicts, immigration, etc.

The third phase is growing cross-cultural awareness (Hanvey, 1975). This cross-cultural awareness shows attentiveness to the multiplicity of ideas and cultural practices around the world. The goal of cross cultural awareness is to develop a critical understanding of how ideas and cultural manifestations may compare with the end aim of a “limited recognition of how the ideas and ways of one's own society might be viewed from other vantage points” (p. 10).

The fourth step of a global consciousness is knowledge of global dynamics (Hanvey, 1975). This is a limited understanding of global structures – economic, political, etc. – and the theories related to consciousness building and change.

The last step of global consciousness is awareness of human choice. This recognizes the authority and autonomy of the individual as an agent in their culture, nation and species with all the attending responsibility. In order to create a sense of agency about what is within an individual's daily reality and also what is farther away these five aspects of a global consciousness can be linked with a local or community consciousness.

Drawing on Hanvey's (1975) work, Merryfield (2000) found that when questioning recognized leaders in the field of global and multicultural education, the respondents noted that awareness and understandings about nationality, class, culture, race, gender, ethnicity and disabilities had been significantly influenced by their own life experiences. Participants who self identified as White and middle-class credited their time in other locales as responsible for critical examinations of economic and political power, and outside of the United States, "they became conscious of what happens to identity when people know they don't belong, and, because of qualities they cannot control, see that they will always be the outsiders" (Merryfield, 2000, p. 439). These leaders shared how knowledge of

power affects the interpretation of human differences and, to some degree, they have been through an experiential personalization of the significance of actually differences and felt firsthand what it is like when one's human differences are

placed towards the center or pushed towards the periphery of local, regional or global societies (Merryfield, 2000, p. 440)

Returning home to their schools and communities, they then committed themselves to the empowerment of fellow educators. By empowering our students to make differences on a global and community level, we will create an education of liberation and social change. This type of education encourages students to devote time and energy to exploring how global problems and issues affect everyone, and how ecological, cultural, economic and political systems are interwoven (Tye, 1991).

This is important because, as mentioned above and earlier in this paper, so many teachers have not lived, spoken or experienced the same lives as their students. Their knowledge of world issues is limited by teacher education courses at the university level that focus more on classroom pragmatics than critical thinking about global issues, and as such, it is essential that teachers somehow experience/see/move beyond themselves and their sheltered worlds. The core of the study abroad is experience, and an increasing body of research literature suggests that experience acts as an essential part of intercultural development (Cushner, 2007). This intercultural development is then translated into improved classroom practice and awareness about concerns beyond local county, state or national borders; with it we can conceptualize the idea of the world as a global village and acknowledge the need for everyone across the globe to work together to preserve natural resources (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1995).

Engle and Engle (2003) define five levels of study or experience abroad with the goal of developing a cross cultural competence and awareness of resources. Level One is a study tour of several days to a few weeks. Level Two is a short term study of three to

eight weeks. Level Three is a cross-cultural contact program of four to five months. Level Four is a cross-cultural encounter program of four to eight months. Level Five is a cross-cultural immersion program of four to twelve months. Regardless of the length of time in the host country, the goal is cross cultural adaptation, and Engle and Engle argue that this can only be achieved abroad. An experience abroad that results in cross cultural adaptation is completely different than travel; “environmental change, though, is something entirely different from a change of scenery. Scenery provides a backdrop but remains separate from the individual; an environment is charged with the dynamics of interaction” (Engle & Engle, 2003, p. 6). Interaction in target communities results in a personal sea change and an awareness of global dynamics and cross cultural respect.

Students can only be expected to evidence an awareness of international affairs if teachers model that knowledge; the experience abroad is shown to be one of the most efficacious ways for teachers to experience and learn about global issues (O’Brien, 2006). Teachers armed with the types of awareness explored above can show students that there is hope for a better world and that they can directly affect their communities in ever widening circles. Teaching this way with “hope is not simply wishful thinking; it is written into those various struggles waged by brave men and women for civil rights, racial justice, decent working conditions and a society cleansed of war,” and our students can join with those brave individuals to make their own marks (Giroux, 2003, p. 43). The next two sections outline some of the ways that the study abroad has been shown to influence teachers both socially/emotionally and in their actual teaching skills. With a sense of awareness built by experience, empowerment developed through seeing change

transform communities, a heightened feeling of empathy combined with a more profound content knowledge, we can inspire students and ourselves to change our world.

The Study Abroad: Social and Emotional Transformations

The genesis of this study came from my own time studying and traveling abroad, and I believe that no other life experience has taught me as much about myself socially and emotionally as being a ‘foreigner’ and watching the world through different eyes. I feel that my commitment to better myself and my world is a direct result of my time in Central and South America. There is little doubt that time abroad has strong links to social and emotional development for others as well. In this section, I will survey the literature that explores the socioemotional domains of a study/experience abroad how an experience abroad directly affects teacher efficacy, empathy/multicultural awareness and agency. For each of the fields below, it should be noted that these socioemotional effects are considered long-lasting and positive (Cushner & Mahon, 2007; Betts & Norquest, 1997).

Personal Efficacy

An experience/study abroad has been correlated to an increase in teacher (and personal) self-confidence as well as a greater awareness and patience for student differences (Casale-Ginnola, 2000). Teachers participating in professional development experiences in other countries return to the United States and report feeling empowered, well rounded and more prepared to do their jobs and handle issues in their personal lives (Abram & Cruce, 2007; Cushner, 2007; Gray, Murdock & Stebbins, 2002; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Stier, 2003).

Willard-Holt (1996) found that after a study abroad participants were less quick to judge and expended more effort trying to get students to understand concepts, particularly students with disabilities. The preservice teachers in the study found that the communication difficulties and minority experience in foreign countries made them more sensitive and determined to work even harder to reach the marginalized students they taught (Willard-Holt, 1996). Teachers reported feeling more competent, patient and able to handle events in personal and professional spheres (Cross, 1998).

O'Brien (2006) found similar results – her teachers returned from a professional development abroad more patient and better equipped to deal with a range of student needs because of their experiences in Africa. Additionally, O'Brien (2006) noted that her informants also felt better prepared to be more successful in their classrooms in their content areas as well as in their personal lives.

For foreign language teachers, study abroad is considered revolutionary and transformative (Jurasek, 1995) and directly related to how prepared second language educators feel for their classes. Study abroad has been shown to create a more empathic, invested and inventive teacher (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008) who has the ability to inspire alongside knowledge of political, economic and social systems around the world who can respond to a schooling environment structured like a testing factory made to churn out worker drones to help stimulate the economy and benefit big business.

In my own life, I credit my experiences abroad with giving me a higher sense of efficacy and self confidence both teaching and personally. My international studies and travels have taught me to rely on myself, trust in others and think creatively.

Empathy/Multicultural Awareness

Another significant socioemotional domain related to experience abroad is a heightened sense of empathy/greater multicultural awareness. Nieto (2004) notes that building a multicultural consciousness is a life-long endeavor, but a study abroad can be a strong influencing factor in creating a multicultural awareness (Merryfield, 2000). Benton and McWilliams (2007) include the following snippet from one of their teacher participants whose eyes were opened during a transatlantic look at children at risk in education—“the past 12 weeks...have [been] one of the most remarkable experiences of my life. This experience has changed the person that I am...I have learned [so much] about myself—I have definitely had a self evaluation” (p. 120).

Self evaluation in these studies later resulted in stereotype reduction. For example, as simplistic as it sounds, one participant in another study commented in her post-study interview that “these kids [Mexican school children] are smart. They are just as smart as any other kid being schooled in the U.S. My assumption, I guess, beforehand, was they weren’t as smart and I feel badly that I thought that” (Faulconer, 2003, p. 20).

Time spent in a different place endows teachers with a greater awareness and respect for their own home; it offers the opportunity for reflection and the possibility of living engaged and meaningfully in their own communities (Orr, 1992). This is because the study abroad is a transformative experience that involves the mind, body and heart (Flournoy, 1994). The whole person comes to “understand what it is like to live outside the mainstream and be perceived as ‘the Other’” (Cushner, 2007, p. 36).

Davidson and McCain’s (2008) research focuses on mostly White, middle-class female teachers who come from rural or small agricultural communities. They note that

although some of their teacher participants had minimal exposure to other countries through brief visits on church mission trips, because those experiences lacked any sort of definable, coherent professional development focused on multiculturalism/diversity, their background only slightly contributed to cultural awareness. Their goal for their teacher participants was a student teaching experience abroad that developed a wider, world view of education. It also focused on learning to live as a foreigner in another culture, developing a flexible approach to new situations and maturing problem solving and listening skills. By implementing a carefully constructed professional development experience with pre-departure preparation/learning and onsite assistance in country, their teacher participants reported strong gains through an improved sense of cultural awareness, raised self-efficacy, and more global worldview.

Yet another study showed that teachers who go abroad have a more nuanced understanding of diversity and multicultural education. One respondent in Cushner and Mahon's (2002) study describes, "the biggest change that happened to me was that I became much more multicultural in my view of the world. I believe that multicultural education happens every day, and that this can become a mind-set" (p. 54). Participant teachers describe their study/experience abroad as transformative (Cushner & Brennan, 2007), enlightening (Wilson & Flournoy, 2007), critical to their development (Cushner & Mahon, 2007), crucial to their development as change agents (Quezada & Alfaro, 2007) and as an opportunity to become more independent and open-minded (Brennan & Cleary, 2007).

Delpit (2006), hooks (1994) and Nieto (2000) all argue that schools today are in dire need of teachers who are more aware and committed to multicultural education.

Nieto (2000) argues that “multicultural education can have a substantive and positive impact on the education of most students” (p. 2), and Cushner (2007) argues that study/experience abroad is one of the most powerful ways of awakening a multicultural awareness.

Agency

The last socioemotional domain that I will explore here is agency. I see agency as the logical combination of empathy/multicultural awareness and efficacy. Teachers returning with a more critical and diverse consciousness who feel empowered personally and professionally will have a higher sense of agency. There is substantial data in the literature to demonstrate that study/experience abroad creates agency. In just about every social and emotional domain, teacher participants in studies abroad show enormous positive growth. The

impact of a study abroad [is] demonstrated [in] that participants report growth, independence, self-reliance, and increased ability to make decisions on their own...[as well as] significant changes in people’s tolerance and understanding of other people and their views...[in addition to] an increase in self-confidence, adaptability, flexibility and confidence (Cushner, 2007, pp. 29-30)

In short, teachers who have an experience abroad become better people and therefore better teachers. Ayers (2004) defines a “good teacher” as someone who is aware that each student is an individual and believes that anyone can change. These outcomes are directly related to the personal growth that teachers experience abroad - they can believe in change because they themselves have been changed.

Betts' and Norquest's (1997) study shows that this growth is long-lasting; in their text, participants showed professional development experience abroad impacted the students' image of self, social identity and increased awareness overall. This growth was demonstrated through reports of new life goals that included more risk-taking, greater respect for people from other cultures, and a wider perspective and world view. Their study also showed strong residual effects over a year after teacher participants returned from their time in Zimbabwe.

The three topics explored above – efficacy, empathy and agency – show the influence of study/experience abroad on social and emotional areas. I will now discuss how an experience abroad influences teachers inside their classrooms.

The Study Abroad: Content Delivery

It is hardly surprising that a study abroad would augment a teacher's ability to deliver classroom content since it offers first hand exposure to the target culture, history, language or peoples. Numerous studies have shown how important this is - the more exciting and real a teacher can make the subject, the more readily students will engage in the tasks at hand. Young (2001) suggests that the future of global education programs depends on the dedication, aptitudes and professionalism of the teachers. This section will briefly cover the literature about pedagogical content and an experience abroad by examining student/teacher interactions, content knowledge, and materials/realia.

Teacher/student interactions

Study/experience abroad is correlated to several significant changes in teacher-student interactions. The first of these involves wait time. Wait time is how long a teacher

pauses after asking a student a question. Allowing for additional time has been shown to be extremely important when dealing with students with disabilities and second language learners. Razzano (1996) noted that teachers who previously did not utilize wait time appropriately in their classrooms incorporated it more effectively upon their return; they demonstrated an increased wait time with their students as a result of their own frustration in attempting to communicate with others when abroad.

Wait time is demonstrative of a teacher's overall patience and competence when dealing with students. Willard-Holt (2001) noted that twenty-five percent of teachers returned from a study/experience abroad showed an increased level of patience along with recognition that it is acceptable for students not to grasp content the first time they are exposed to it. Those teachers also came back further committed to encouraging students about how they might best use their own knowledge, skills and abilities to impact the world (Willard-Holt, 2001).

Young (2001) showed that teachers returning from an experience abroad viewed traditionally marginalized students differently – they returned with the realization that their students were capable of making positive impacts in their schools and communities – because they had gained an awareness and appreciation of where those certain students were from. Young's educators noted how their time in Southeast Asia prepared them for the unique experiences/situations their Cambodian students and their families like nothing else had or could. When reminiscing, one participant noted that previous to the study tour, she did not understand the Khmer children/family in her school very well; she would look

at their drawings and not fully understanding the meaning behind the images. ‘I learned from their drawings,’ she states, ‘but teachers needed more cultural background and awareness of what these kids went through. If we had this, we could have integrated their experiences more fully into the curriculum’” (Young, 2001, p. 31)

Nieto (2000) argues that it is essential that teachers become conscious and informed about the uniqueness of student experiences. In the example above, Khmer children were greatly influenced by their refugee status, and to be an effective teacher, it would be indispensable to understand and leverage that experience for their benefit.

Perceptual understanding, which has been shown to be linked to study abroad, is related to how teachers run their classrooms and is defined as “open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize and non-chauvinism” (Wilson, 1993, p. 22). An increase in perceptual understanding as the result of an international experience explains how the teachers in Sandgren, Ellig, Hovde, Krejci, and Rice’s (1999) study reported changes in philosophical and instructional practice with more group work and enhanced communication with students. The researchers also gathered comments from grantees’ students and compared student perceptions of instruction with non-grantee classrooms and found that students were also able to perceive a change in instruction.

Similar to Betts and Norquest (1997), Cross (1998) found that a Peace Corps experience was able to profoundly and positively influence teachers even thirty years later. Cross (1998) examines how a Peace Corps experience translates into classroom practice. Other stakeholders - principals, students and staff members - viewed ex-Peace

Corps teachers as uniquely “self-confident, flexible, mature [and] culturally sensitive” (p. 5). They show high levels of personal and teacher efficacy, regardless of their own cultural or racial background; and they are “successful in teaching jobs in schools with a high percentage of troubled minority students and relatively few resources” (Cross, 1998, p. 6). Ex-Peace Corps teachers demonstrated an increased ability to shape students’ answers by rephrasing the question or asking a new one, furnishing hints, or offering assistance. In addition, they were shown to spend more time on instruction, praise students more frequently, encourage cooperative learning and maintain more relaxed and friendly classrooms (Cross, 1998). Ex volunteers also showed a higher level of resilience. When faced with difficulties with their students, they were determined to persevere and help students overcome obstacles that prevented them from succeeding in school.

Cross (1998) describes these teachers’ time in the Peace Corps as “a mastery experience for these volunteers” (p. 27) that prepared them to do the challenging job of educating in demanding, culturally diverse environments. One former volunteer and current teacher describes her past time in the Peace Corps as responsible for her present avocation: “I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t have [taken up the challenge of teaching in the inner city without having been in the Peace Corps]” (Cross, 1998, p. 32). Nine other volunteers interviewed also responded that their time in the Peace Corps was responsible for their decision to go into education and that their time abroad exceptionally prepared them for their time as teachers, particularly in their interactions with students (Cross, 1998).

Content Knowledge

It is hardly surprising that an experience abroad would influence a teacher's ability to address content. Personally, as a foreign language teacher, I cannot imagine how I would be able to communicate, understand or teach about my target language without my time spent abroad. Pearson, Fonseca-Greber and Foell (2006) explore how study abroad is the most effective way for foreign language teachers to attain the new licensure guidelines established by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); they show that is nearly impossible to achieve the writing, listening and speaking ability mandated without in-depth exposure to the target language achieved by overseas study.

O'Brien's (2006) study echoes my anecdotal example; her research showed that her participants increased cognitive knowledge, content understanding and confidence in their ability to teach during their professional development experience in Africa. One teacher responded that her new knowledge about Swahili history facilitated her goal of making content come alive for students (O'Brien, 2006). The respondents in O'Brien's (2006) work reiterate how much they learned about the target goals of Africa and Islam and how much more effective that this new knowledge would make their teaching.

Wilson (1984) also discusses teachers who returned from a professional development in Africa, and she observed that teachers who participated in a study tour to Nigeria were more likely to correct student misperceptions and stereotypes about Africa. In addition, those teachers were likely to use more appropriate materials to convey information to students and teach enthusiastically about African topics. Wilson's participants also reported that they were more enthusiastic about teaching upon their

return. These teachers became cultural mediators who brokered knowledge more effectively (Wilson, 1986).

This is because these individuals have increased their substantive knowledge. Wilson (1993) notes that an international experience for educators can help develop substantive knowledge which translates readily to classroom practice because it is “knowledge of other cultures and a general awareness of world issues, global dynamics and human choices” (p. 22). Thompson (2002) confirms this in his study that in-service teachers who have not traveled abroad before showed significant improvement in their knowledge of and ability to incorporate cultural information into their classrooms after their study overseas.

Willard-Holt (2001) concurred when they noted that eighty-eight percent of participating teachers incorporated subject matter from their trip into their instruction upon their return. Respondents taught units on Mexico, multicultural education, diversity, celebrations, and history. More than a simple focus on Latin-America, however, the brief (six day) professional development exchange encouraged the informants to teach students to think more globally about the multitude of events beyond classroom walls.

Several of Young’s (2001) participants described how returning from a study tour in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam enhanced and positively influenced their relationships with their Southeast Asian students. Even though the teachers did not have an extended period of time in the three countries, the study tour initiated a foundation for teachers to explore their own concepts of the culture, traits and character of the places they visited. One of the key issues the participating educators struggled with is the

concept of how to communicate the complexity of global economic systems to their students.

These changes do not only affect K12 teachers. Sandgren et al. (1999) examined how university professors were affected after a brief immersion experience. Their participating faculty members perceived an increase in the incorporation of global topics in their pedagogy. Sandgren et al. noted that some professors changed content in the courses, and/or their approaches to information gathering and distribution upon return to the United States. They demonstrated changes in their course content by using examples from their travels. They returned more able to make their subjects alive for their students.

Teachers who participate in an experience abroad return better equipped to teach their content areas due to their learning in other countries. Returning to a concern raised earlier in this paper, these teachers are able to integrate international concepts into their classrooms because they have had this time abroad (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins; 2002).

Materials/realia

The last content area that I would like to discuss is that of materials/realia. This is undoubtedly linked to how teachers improved their content area pedagogy, but as a foreign language teacher, I see this as a little different. I would argue that putting actual objects into students' hands that they are studying takes learning to a whole new level. When learners can touch, feel, use or see the things they are studying, the subject matter takes on a deeper meaning. Razzano (1996) found that in addition to wait time, returning teachers used other effective instructional techniques in new ways such as realia/authentic materials, a rise in inclusive/multi-perspective lesson plans, and more

involved critical thinking exercises. Wilson (1984) and O'Brien (2006) showed that social studies, literature and art teachers incorporated target culture materials in their classes after an experience abroad and those students reacted positively to these additions. Sandgren et al. (1999) show that university professors also integrate target culture realia as well.

I will conclude this discussion of content area changes with the words from Young's (2001) study. The educators who participated in the Southeast Asia study tour returned to the United States more aware of historical, cultural and socioeconomic forces and were then able to use this knowledge in their classrooms. Young concludes that

international study tours are...an extremely effective method for helping teachers develop deeper cultural understanding and sensitivity towards students who have difficulty in school due to cultural or language differences. Teachers who recognize these differences are more likely to develop new pedagogical strategies and curricula to accommodate these students so that they are able to reach their full academic and social potential. By exercising this increased understanding and sensitivity towards minority students, teachers also model behaviors that encourage mainstream students to be more tolerant, accepting and even appreciative of cultural diversity (2001, p. 43)

Problematizing Study Abroad

Even though there are numerous examples of the positive impact of study/experience abroad as explored above, it is not, like all aspects of education, without its downside. Phillion, Malewski, Rodriguez, Shirley, Kulago, and Bulington (2008) explore some of the negative aspects of study abroad for a group of teachers from a

Midwestern university. Like the informants in my study, Phillion et al.'s teachers attended a brief professional development experience in Honduras. Although the participants responded that they felt "transformed and empowered" (p. 372) by their time in Honduras, the researchers caution that, unfortunately, the experience actually reinforced unconscious stereotypes regarding White privilege. The teachers interviewed "held a decontextualized sense of self and the world and were resistant to notions of both White privilege and a racialized past that is also classed, gendered and sexed" (Phillion et al., 2008, pp. 367-368). As a result, they were not capable, perhaps due to their reluctance, to reflect on personal and national practices that are responsible for the current political, economic and social circumstances in Honduras.

Not only did the teachers return without a clear and critical understanding of structural, historical, political and economic inequities in Honduras, they failed to make connections to poverty in the United States. One respondent commented that "I guess we do have a lot [of poverty], with the hurricane victims and they're kind of just like forgotten about...but I don't think it [poverty] was as dramatic as in other places" (Phillion et al., 2008, p. 378). Although this teacher (like several other of her fellow participants) returned to the United States feeling like an agent of change for her own community—the particular focus of my research—Phillion et al. observe that "this seems to have happened without [her] having developed an accompanying sense of the political dimensions of poverty's origins and [her] place of privilege within them" (2008, pp. 375-376). Their teachers, for all their earnestness and desire to be better educators and community members, failed to make personal, critical examinations of their experiences.

Phillion et al.'s (2008) participants did not have a critical view of poverty and its various manifestations. Poverty, in both the developed and developing world, comes in many guises. It is dangerous to assume that because the United States has a great deal of wealth and the poor are essentially quarantined to barrios or ghettos and are invisible to the larger middle class, that poverty does not exist. Additionally, there are many different kinds of poverty other than simple lack of food, shelter or medical care. Phillion et al.'s (2008) participants lacked a well rounded social justice viewpoint that understands the various current manifestations of poverty.

Willard-Holt (2001) found somewhat similar results; in her study, participating teachers returned to the United States after their brief (six day) experience in Mexico with an over-inflated sense of their teacher competence. One respondent "felt as though I could do anything" (p. 514) in her classroom. Unfortunately, no educator can do everything (although I would like to feel I could). Other participants returned with an exaggerated estimation of their own understanding of diversity. One teacher described her newfound, 6 day competence in an exaggerated manner; she believed that, due to her week in Mexico, she would be able to explain to her students all about the lives of Mexican students. Willard-Holt, when analyzing the responses, cautions that the informants did not seem to understand all that encompasses becoming an expert on another culture. This takes years, even a lifetime; many professionals have devoted their entire professional career to the study of multicultural education.

I would suggest, however, as does Phillion et al., that all is not lost. Study abroad can offer promising outcomes and culturally enlightening experiences. Willard-Holt (2001) describes the professional development studies as beneficial "without exception"

for her participating teachers (p. 515) even though some returned with over-inflated senses of accomplishment. This research reminds us that as we travel, research and live in our communities, it is imperative that we take a critical approach to understanding our own privilege. Phillion et al.'s research, as does mine, will not offer a facile apologia for travel nor packaged answers. To be critical and engaged educators, we must “recognize...the teacher’s obligation...[to] see the world in its fullness, the good and bad of it...[to act] tempered with doubt, with the knowledge that we’ve not got it fully right...[but continue] to improve life on the ground: right here, right now” (Ayers, 2004, p. 161).

The Gap in the Literature

Obviously, no scholar wants to rehash what has already been proven or explored in their field. The goal of my study is to combine the topics above to explore how educators grow socially, emotionally and pedagogically during a professional development experience abroad in order be able to adequately address issues about hunger, poverty and environmental degradation specifically in their content areas and home institutions. The statistics about hunger and poverty show the importance of awakening a global consciousness in our students. It is not optional; right now our world is squandering resources—both human and environmental—and change requires an engaged, knowledgeable youth. In a market driven economy/world, we need to return to a “citizenship education [that] helps pupils understand issues around them [and] develop a balanced and informed view of these issues...to respond in active and responsible ways to what is happening in the wider world” (Ganihar, 2007, p. 131).

I was particularly intrigued about how the concerns explored above in Phillion et al. (2008) and Willard-Holt (2001) would be manifested in Heifer's Study Tour for Educators. HPI's professional development is slightly different than many of the study abroads explored above for several reasons. First, the participating educators in the Study Tour are usually in-service teachers, administrators and counselors. They tend to be leaders in their various fields and have years of experience. They tend to be less naïve and more knowledgeable about social justice. However, even though they may be leaders, Sleeter (2000) writes that concerns about White privilege are often subconscious, so Phillion et al.'s (2008) critique is still pertinent.

Secondly, the Study Tour purports to directly address social justice concerns, unlike student teaching examples above. I was interested in examining if and how a direct examination of social justice would influence educators instead of leaving critical learning up to the individual. Thirdly the Study Tour aims to go out into rural and impoverished areas in Honduras and encourage communication between project partners and grantees. Unlike a study abroad where an individual can remain in higher socioeconomic areas, the Study Tour visits rural, destitute areas. These three aspects of the Study Tour make the research gained during this inquiry new and pertinent.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used for this dissertation. The techniques chosen and employed were informed by postpositivist realist theory with the goal of addressing both the research questions and considerations of power and interpretation. I begin by briefly exploring the promise of qualitative research then focus on the structure—case study—of my work. Methods of data collection and analysis will also be discussed.

Teaching and learning are inherently social activities that are intimately tied to our perceptions, experiences and developing knowledge about the worlds that surround us. In order to investigate topics such as these, I selected qualitative research to explore “the world of lived experience...where individual belief and action intersect with culture” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 12). I did so, because unlike the subjects of studies in the fields of chemistry or geology, the participants in research studies in the social sciences are individuals and cannot be quantified easily. Each person is the sum of millions of different interactions, experiences, beliefs and points of view.

My particular research focused on a professional development experience abroad in which I was a participant observer. Qualitative research lends itself well to this dynamic, because it “help[s] us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (Merriam, 1998, p.5). Within the larger field of qualitative research, there are numerous approaches to gathering and presenting data. Of the multitude of options, I chose one particular form of qualitative

research—the case study. In the next section, I will define what constitutes a case study and describe how the case study methodology was used in my work.

Case Study Focus

Case studies are considered prevalent, accepted and descriptive in the field of education research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Nieto, 2004; Nunan, 1998; Stake, 2003). They can be defined as a form of empirical inquiry that considers the lived experiences of the participants within the context they occur (Yin, 2003). According to Stake (2003), there are two different kinds of case studies—intrinsic and instrumental. My research utilizes collective instrumental case studies in order to investigate or explain an issue, which may lead to a better understanding about other topics as well (Stake, 2003).

Defining Case Studies

The terms *case study* and *case report* seem to be almost omnipresent in education research; although perhaps every graduate (and possibly undergraduate) student has read multiple examples, there appears to be some confusion about what case studies actually are. In this section, I will explore four features that help to distinguish case study research from other types of qualitative studies. Alongside the accepted definitions of this type of research, I will elucidate how my own work meets these standards.

One of the key distinguishing aspects of case study investigation is the concept of boundedness; the case study examines a single phenomenon or issue and does not purport to study everything about a topic (Merriam, 1998). Case studies do not assert to examine everything about the participants—only what falls within the scope of the study. Stake (2003) cautions “coherence and sequence are important...certain features are within the

system, within the boundaries of the case, and other features outside” (p. 135). In this type of research, the investigator sets clear and definable edges to their work and focuses only on what falls inside those parameters. The notions of limitations and boundedness are significant ones; Merriam (1998) notes that case study research is characterized by carefully delineating the case. In my research, the bounded system was provided by the parameters of the professional development abroad and how it influences my five informants; “the most straightforward examples of ‘bounded systems’ are those in which the boundaries have a common sense obviousness, e.g....an innovatory programme” (Adelman, Jenkins, & Kemmis, 1976). The Study Tour for Educators is Heifer International’s innovative curriculum for on-site consciousness building; the duration of the experience provided natural boundaries for the case study.

Case studies are also noted as an effective way to engage both the researcher and the reader in the lives and experiences of the participants. The idea of immersion is a significant one and is linked to the concept of boundedness. Within the parameters of the study, the researcher dives deep into the issues to explore in depth the phenomenon under investigation. This type of research requires meaningful connections to the location and participants. As a participant-observer during the Study Tour in Honduras, my use of the case study methodology showed a research design principally suited phenomena in context where there are multiple data sources (Yin, 2003).

Another defining feature of case study research is borrowed from anthropology. Because the researcher is immersed within the bounds of a specific instance - the case - they are given the opportunity to explore it in detail and present the reader with thick description. Thick description “illustrate[s] the complexities of a situation...[and]

show[s] the influence of personalities on the issue” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). Thick description lends itself well to analysis and theory development (Glesne, 1999). In my own work, thick description is the portal through which other teachers that may not have had the opportunity to have some time abroad could come to learn about and grapple with the same kinds of issues that these participants experienced.

The last characteristic of case studies is that even though they are bounded, the researchers are immersed in the situation and they offer thick description, many times case studies are also applicable to larger issues. Because the cases are well researched, authentic representations of the beliefs, experiences and perceptions of the participants, their strength is reality, and this makes case studies appealing to practitioners in the (Nunan, 2003). This type of qualitative research examines a very specific case, so that we may first understand it, and then moves to understand more about the world (Glesne, 1999). Even though case study examines a bounded phenomenon, it may clarify a larger issue (Merriam, 1998). The information gleaned is more concrete, more contextual, more developed, and the reader participates in meaning making and extending generalizations (Stake, 1981). I sought to research the personal, bounded experience of three individuals in the hopes of creating a body of work that is applicable and useful to a larger group regarding teacher perceptions of social and environmental justice issues.

Concerns and Limitations of Case Studies

Although there are many proponents of using case studies as a form of inquiry, this research is not without its detractors as well. There are those who philosophically differ on a theoretical basis with the whole idea of case studies and those who critique the

process. In this section, I will briefly address two of the most noteworthy points of criticism—the issues of generalization and representation.

One of the most significant criticisms arises from the very essence of case studies; as in many things, strengths can also be a weakness. Case studies are defined by their boundedness, immersion into the case and close attention to detail. While many feel that the results of case studies are generalizable (Brown, 2006; Bush, 2007; Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Nunan, 2003; O'Brien, 2006; Stake, 2003) to a certain extent, others argue that the microscopic focus on individuals, situations or bounded phenomena does not lend itself to understanding the larger whole. The question arises whether it is possible to generalize from the particular experience of a single study to a larger context (Yin, 2003).

Although I recognize the criticism as an understandable and valid one, I do not agree that case studies (and qualitative research as a whole) are not pertinent to a larger context. Consistent with this point of view is my belief that there does not exist anything that is always relevant to that larger context. The interpretation of human experience is mutable. I recognize “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p. 13) which make experience both shared and individual. By choosing qualitative case studies as the methodology for data collection and postpositivist realist theory as the theoretical framework for the analysis of data, I am recognizing that “knowledge...comes into being in and through embodied selves” (Moya, 2000, p. 18). Each informant offered a unique and indispensable way of conceptualizing their professional development experience abroad with Heifer International.

Another considerable concern in case study research (and in qualitative research as a whole) is the problem or question of representation. Kirsch (1999) questions whether researchers can remain neutral and describe others' experiences without misrepresentation or distortion. When presenting the experience and words of informants, there are always questions of power, privilege and the extent of our ability to truly communicate what others say. Van Manen (2003) notes "experience is always more immediate, more enigmatic, more complex, more ambiguous than any description can do justice to" (p. xvii).

Of the two concerns explored here, the problem of representation is the most troublesome to me. I consider myself a feminist, and "feminist researchers are cognizant of the cultural situatedness of *all* research; the relations between researchers and participants are *never* neutral, and that research questions are *never* disinterested" (Kirsch, 1999, p. 18, emphasis in original). While I do not believe questions of representation can ever be eliminated, I took certain steps to ameliorate concerns about representation. By relying heavily on the case study ideal of thick description, triangulating my research and asking my informants to perform member checks, my hope is their experiences speak for themselves. I performed analysis of the data, but I also sought to include the words of the informants to address concerns about representation.

To conclude, as explored above, the case study methodology is a pertinent, useful and illustrative form of investigation. Adelman et al. (1976) defined six reasons that it is advantageous to employ case studies thirty years ago. Their reasons are still pertinent: case studies are illustrative of individual experience, generalizable, representative of different points of view, accessible, exhaustive regarding their topic and therefore can

provide a wealth of materials, and, lastly, they are immediately useful as feedback in staff development or in policy formation. When deciding what to spend a year (or more) of my life researching, I wanted to study something that would be for the benefit of others and related to ideas of social justice. By employing the case study method to examine how teacher perceptions change via an experience abroad, I am following in the best of the qualitative research tradition which argues that “qualitative inquiry is a search that leads into others’ lives, [my] discipline, [my] practice” and myself (Glesne, 1999, p. 199).

My Research

Setting

The geographical setting for the professional development experience studied in my research was the country of Honduras; it took place during June, 2009 throughout Heifer International’s Study Tour for Educators. The grantees were split into two parties, and I participated in the study June 11th through the 20th. There were fifteen educators who were awarded grants to participate; of these, I concentrated on five informants. I focused on three phases of the program—orientation, end of the program, and two months after return—to define the case.

The orientation phase occurred in Houston, Texas before the grantees left the United States. The purpose of this time was to create a sense of group unity, “explore Heifer’s educational mission and goals, [discuss] new directions for Heifer’s educational programs, [begin the] exploration of global topics (world food systems, globalization, conflict resolution, relief vs. development, etc.), [offer] opportunities for professional growth and development, [and the] sharing of best practices” (¶3, “Heifer University’s Programs,” n.d.). The second phase focused on the end of the professional development,

as the informants began to process their time in various rural and urban community development sites. The last phase focused on informants two to three months after return to the United States after they have gone back to their home institutions.

Honduras provided an ideal setting for this professional development. Most Americans have little prior knowledge about Central American countries and the historical and socioeconomic forces at play there. One of my research interests was related to how aware the informants were of the context they were in and how prepared



Figure 5: Urban Tegucigalpa



Figure 6: Rural Honduras

they were (before the experience abroad) to incorporate issues from the developing world into their classroom. This study focused particularly on how and if their time abroad changed them in regard to personal advocacy as well as their ability to teach.

Honduras is roughly the size of Tennessee, and it has a population of slightly more than seven and half million citizens (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008). The literacy rate hovers around eighty percent, and the vast majority of its citizens live in poverty (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008). Three out of ten women routinely suffer domestic violence, and the average school attendance is less than five years (Wheeler, 2004, p. 28). To compare, United States domestic violence rates for 2006 average a little

more than fifteen percent of the entire population as victims (National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2009), and, in 2003, the Census Bureau reported that roughly eighty five percent of Americans under the age of 25 graduated high school while approximately twenty seven percent had an associate degree or beyond (United States Census, 2004). Twenty five percent of all Honduran children are considered malnourished, with that number nearly doubling in rural areas (Wheeler, 2004, p. 29). The primacy of the poverty, hunger and environmental state in Honduras provide an immediate, visual and visceral shock, and they can seem overwhelming. I believe the issues above and the historical, political and socioeconomic concerns present in Honduras function well as a prototype of the types of problems found in much of the developing world.

The sample/participants

The five informants chosen represent the variety of views and opinions among the fifteen Heifer grantees. The individuals studied were selected because they gave the researcher opportunities to learn (Stake, 2003) in detail about educator experiences during the professional development abroad. Participants were originally solicited via an email (Appendix C) to all grantees. I had initially planned to narrow the informant pool based on diversity (of location, professional position, background, etc.), availability (of informant's location, the openness of their home institution), and exceptionality (if something in the autobiographical sketches and grant applications seemed distinctive to the researcher). However, only five individuals responded within the time constraints listed; those five became my informants. Even though their participation was somewhat serendipitous, they do represent geographic, gender and career diversity among the larger group of fifteen grantees.

Once informants were selected, each individual signed an informed consent document (Appendix D) which gave an overview of the study and outlined what informants would be asked to do. In addition, this document gave informants the steps to end participation in the study as well as the procedures used to maintain confidentiality.

Informant Profiles

Michel is a 45- year old male from outside of Anchorage, Alaska. He is currently employed at Aleut University in the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences as both a full professor and department chair; he has taught at the university level as either a professor or teaching assistant for the last 22 years. Aleut University is a large (20,000 students), suburban school with open enrollment. Michel described the student body as fairly diverse, with a range of ages and backgrounds. According to Aleut University's website, roughly a third of AU students are nonwhite and over half of them are over 25 years old.

Michel has an extensive background in social justice and advocacy issues, and he can speak coherently, concisely and convincingly on his points of view regarding those topics. Michel was one of my most intriguing informants; he is both extremely knowledgeable about world issues and committed to living in an ecologically sustainable manner. It is hardly surprising that he would be able to reference systems and structures when speaking about hunger, poverty and environmental degradation, since one of his courses focuses largely on those topics: "I do a lot of stuff in my Geography 101/International Studies 101 class that I teach....that deal[s] with poverty and environmental issues. I mean, this is the whole focus of the course" (Michel, pp. 2-3).

A large part of his personal, academic and professional life has focused on these issues; Michel described himself as the child of leftists during the age of Nixon whose parents were academics also invested in social justice. As a boy, he traveled to Latin America with his parents when his father was awarded fellowships to study. His mother was also a refugee from Panamá, and he and his family visited there when he was young. Certain early experiences led Michel to begin studying geography; during his time at university, those “formative things started to really have some more clarity for me....and I started to take courses that dealt with global issues and learned what kwashiorkor was... I remember hearing about overpopulation issues and demography” (Michel, p. 2). From his very rudimentary understanding as a child, Michel has since developed a well reasoned and thorough academic and personal understanding of social justice issues.

Michel was very eager to engage in critical examinations about some of the root causes of poverty during the trip but felt that the group did not devote enough time to those topics. He was the only male in our group and sometimes became a little impatient with the debriefing sessions that seemed to disintegrate into emotional recollections of the day’s events. Michel and I had several conversations throughout the trip about our preference for a more intellectual examination of what we experienced, but at the end of the trip, Michel noted that for as much as he would have liked a more critical engagement with historical and structural concerns,

I don’t think this is the place, and I don’t think there’s enough time. I mean, on one level there is; people, you know, can’t look at the poverty we’ve seen or the changes that have taken place in the communities and not begin to think critically.

But developing the sorts of critical and theoretical knowledge base that you and I are both interested in I don't think takes place on a trip like this. (Michel p. 9)

Michel spent quite a bit of time processing how the trip went and wrestling with this idea of connecting critically/intellectually/emotionally to social justice during a study tour because he is planning to take a group of his university students to China in the summer of 2010 with Heifer. He has close ties with the education department in Little Rock (HPI's headquarters) and uses 'the Heifer model' in his Geography 101/International Studies 101 class as a starting point for discussions about areas, poverty, and advocacy. His class webpage describes this approach; Geography 101 examines

issues that affect various parts of the world by exploring how individual families and localities are impacted by these issues. This is an effort to make the more traditional world geography/global issue course less abstract and more real, which can be a hard thing to do in a course that purports to look at all of the world and its major issues. Of course, no course can do this, but what we can begin to get a sense of in GEOG/INTL 101 is how small places are impacted by the more abstract issues we hear about in the news and from other media sources. (Michel Syllabus)

Michel has integrated Heifer case studies as a platform for discussing food security, current events and development while introducing the subject of geography. One of the required assignments is an in-depth exploration of a Heifer case study; please see Appendix F for a class rubric. After learning about Heifer's work throughout the course, it is possible for students to get involved with a service club at AU; Michel strongly

recommends that students do so and has required a service-learning component in his GEOG101/INTL 101 course.

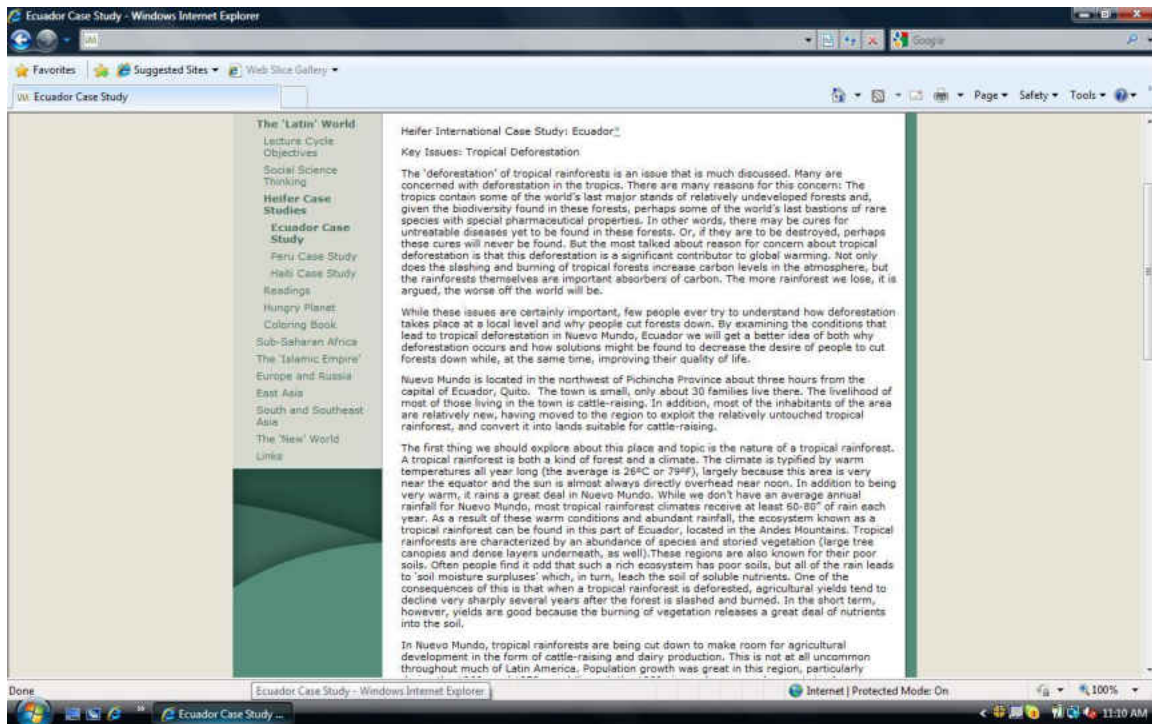


Figure 7: A Case Study Write Up on Michel's Course Webpage

Michel views his course as a starting point for students, particularly the more traditional 18 year old college freshman, to engage with systems and structures as well as learn about traditional geography. By integrating a service component into class, he hopes to alleviate some of the “despondency” that might paralyze students after learning about hunger, poverty or environmental degradation. Encouraging students to feel empowered to address both global and local issues is fundamental to Michel’s professional goals. As his course syllabus states,

a class can be about far more than simply learning information to be regurgitated on an exam so that a general education requirement can be fulfilled. Service-

learning argues that classes are opportunities for students to become engaged and choose to make changes to their world (Aleut University).

Outside of his professional life, Michel also has a high awareness and level of advocacy at home. He and his wife are Alaskan homesteaders. They garden, compost, fish and home school their three children at their 700 square foot cabin. Michel is extremely committed to living with the



Figure 8: Michel's family's cabin

smallest carbon footprint as possible, and he and his wife have built their home gradually by themselves using Earth-friendly products. Michel considers himself moderately involved in volunteer causes and highly aware and engaged politically. He has traveled and lived outside of the United States and is comfortable in a range of situations.

Hannah is a 28 year-old female from outside of Orlando, Florida. She is originally from New Jersey, but she moved down to Florida during college and has stayed. She comes from a family of teachers and is devoted to the profession. She recently was promoted to 3rd grade team leader as one of the schools in her district, New Beginnings International School, moves toward achieving International Baccalaureate (IB) status. IB schools have the stated goal of “develop[ing] inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” (International Baccalaureate, 2009, ¶1), which aligns perfectly with Hannah’s personal and professional values. During her first interview, Hannah described her desire for her students: “teaching them from the time that they’re little that they are instruments in changing some of the current problems and

that it doesn't just exist and you have to deal with it; it's things that can be changed and should be changed" (Hannah, p. 11).

New Beginnings opened for the 2009-2010 school year; it is a school choice school with enrollment chosen by lottery. New Beginnings is unique in that it requires 20 hours of involvement yearly from parents and/or family. It is the county's first "green" school, and its only international K-5 program. Hannah works both in the classroom and as a lead teacher. Hannah was chosen for this position based on her strong teaching credentials and her academic background. The Study Tour aligned perfectly with Hannah's academic background and also for all of New Beginnings' exploratory and innovative programming.

Hannah was working on completing her Master's degree in global and international education during the summer of the Study Tour. She was drawn to her graduate program because it represented a marriage of ideas that Hannah was interested in – travel, peace education and multiculturalism. She was particularly excited about using ideas that she gained during the Study Tour to provide a framework for her Master's capstone project. Hannah created a series of lesson plans based on Heifer's cornerstones for her fellow teachers to use as they implemented the IB ideology. An example of those lesson plans can be found in Appendix G.

Although Hannah was very excited to be moving to New Beginnings, she was saddened to be leaving her former school behind. Like Sherry and Nicole, two other informants from schools with a high Latino/immigrant population, Hannah evidenced a strong awareness of issues related to second language learners, students in poverty and

immigrant students. At her former school, Hannah’s class was made of largely transient students with a diverse and pressing range of needs.

Hannah was extremely successful in reaching these high needs students and empowering them to take charge of their own education. During the 2008-2009 school year she did a cycle of activities with students to raise their awareness of issues surrounding hunger and poverty. Like many of my other informants, she also incorporated a service-learning component to this series of lessons. She explained it thusly:

It was not just, ‘Okay, we’re gonna learn about this topic.’ It was the topic paired with a service-learning opportunity, which we ended up raising over five hundred dollars in just a month and a half with only three classes. So they really took to it, they really got involved, and they took it personally. (Hannah, p. 4)

According to her, they became so excited about raising money and learning about hunger and poverty because they felt connected to other children that Hannah used to discuss the topic.

Throughout the Study Tour, Hannah continually sought ways to make the information that she was learning “alive” for students and to give them an avenue for relating to others. Her desire was to make critical issues as large as hunger, poverty and environmental degradation comprehensible and accessible to younger children. As part of her framework to interpolate students into the lives of the children and families in Honduras, she took a teddy bear, “Journey,” with her. She planned to return home with



Figure 9: Journey

Journey and use pictures with Journey in classroom activities. Her goal was for students, like Journey, to explore these topics and make personal connections to people like and unlike themselves; via Journey, she wanted to

share the stories that I experienced with the students through the eyes of this bear, which will then come back to school with me so they can hold him and touch him, and sit with him and watch the presentation that I'm going to create. So it becomes a tangible item from the trip so that hopefully they'll be able to relate a little bit better. (Hannah, p. 9)

Journey not only provided an avenue for Hannah to share her experiences with her students in the United States, but he was also a wonderful ice breaker as Hannah interacted with children in the various communities we visited in Honduras.

Outside of the classroom, Hannah defined herself as marginally involved with volunteer causes and political advocacy in her community. While she possessed a fairly high level of academic understanding of issues like poverty and care for the Earth, during our first interview Hannah identified herself as not “much of a political person” (Hannah, p. 8). She described herself as someone who was accustomed to “nice vacations,” and although she has traveled extensively, she remained in more touristy and affluent areas. Her time on the Study Tour in the various communities made the issue of poverty much more immediate for and to her; “it took me from books and readings to a personal level that I couldn't have gotten any other way” (Hannah, p. 8). Even though Hannah may not have started the tour viewing herself as a strong advocate for change, by the end of the trip, she verbally committed to a fuller engagement on a political level.

Nicole is a 30 year old female from outside of San Francisco, California. She was another particularly fascinating informant. Nicole is originally from the Midwest, but she moved to California several years ago. She described herself as very sheltered as a child. When she was two years old, her family lived in Mexico for two years, and her first seminal moment of critical engagement with poverty dates to that time. Nicole reminisced her basic understanding at four; “it slowly became a realization that people might live differently in different places” (Nicole, p. 1). From that early recognition, Nicole’s now more mature worldview has been developed via exposure to classes she has taken in college as well as living in her community in California. Nicole’s current goals are to live in an ecologically and socially just manner.

Nicole has worked for eight years in education; of these, two have been in the classroom and another six in outdoor and experiential education. Her current position is a unique liaison between Muir Community School and Scenic Valley Farm. Scenic Valley is a 1600-acre non-profit, organic farm and wilderness preserve outside of San Francisco which offers educational opportunities to learn about the environment and social justice. Muir Community School is a K-5 elementary school with a largely Latino student body. Nicole estimated that roughly seventy five percent of Muir students receive free and reduced lunch and eighty five percent of the attendees speak Spanish in their homes. Like Hannah and Sherry, Nicole was much more aware of issues that affect second language learners and some of the complexities surrounding immigration, remittances and international trade.

Nicole’s position is unique. Her title is the school’s Science Enrichment Teacher, and her salary is largely funded by an anonymous donor who also funds another position

at Muir. While Nicole focuses on 5th grade, she does activities with all Muir's students. Her position was created and funded to help Muir meet the California science standardized test goals; many of Muir's students have little or no exposure to agricultural activities or applied science methods. Nicole's official job description reads:

The Science Enrichment Teacher is a Scenic Valley staff member working full-time at Muir Community School, teaching science enrichment activities that match the 5th grade California State Science standards while pursuing creative experimental techniques and incorporating exciting science labs and garden curricula into the students' learning. This teacher also works with the after-school programs providing a "Garden Club" for interested students, introducing them to natural cycles, to healthy food choices, and to master the methods of caring for organic vegetables. The teacher also provides "pre-teaching" opportunities for the next week's science lab to 5th grade after-school participants. The teacher also manages the school garden so that all students (Kindergarten - 5th grade) have educational opportunities and use of the garden (N. Wolfe, personal communication, July 16, 2009).

Nicole has done a wide range of activities with students regarding hunger, poverty and care for the Earth. She reminisced about two of her favorite lessons that she has done with students in her first interview. Every year, Nicole shows students a series of images from the "Hungry Planet" work of Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005), in which the authors, photojournalists, traveled to various parts of the world and took pictures of families with their customary food intake for a week. Menzel and D'Aluisio's text shows consumption habits and, as a direct extension, socioeconomic status. Jenny remarked,

all of them [the pictures] have all the food out that they will eat in a week. Some of them will have water and rice and different things and how much money they



Figure 10: Image from "Hungry Planet" accessed August 8, 2009 from http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1645016_1408128,00.html

spend on that. That's really a powerful topic for—I did it with my fifth-graders, and it was really a powerful topic for them to kind of think about what they eat, why they eat it, how much food they eat. How they... And I think that eating and poverty are basically hand in hand. (Nicole, p. 3)

Nicole reported that students responded well to the series of activities they did with "Hungry Planet." At the end of lesson cycle, students then raised money to give to Heifer International.

Nicole's other favorite lesson incorporated an activity from Heifer's educational curricula. One of HPI's Global Educational Resource Kits (GERK) is focused on urban gardening. Nicole did a series of classes focused on food waste and



Figure 11: Nicole's Class Composting Project

composting. A copy of her lesson plan is included in Appendix H. She described how

students would start off talking about composting as something “nasty,” but at the end of the learning time, students would fight for the opportunity to feed the worms in the vermicomposting bin. Students began to actively recycle and compost by the end of the year. This was a dramatic change for students, because the vast majority of them are first or second generation immigrants from Latin America. Waste disposal cultural mores in rural Latin America do not typically value recycling, compost or integrated waste disposal.

Outside of the classroom, Nicole described herself as moderately involved with volunteer causes, although not to any particular organization. She and her husband are both committed to economically and socially just consumption practices, although before the Heifer trip Nicole did not realize how significant small decisions could be:

Prior to this trip I tried to buy most of my stuff locally grown anyway and I tried to buy more environmentally friendly products and things like that, but I never thought about in terms of, *Well, if I buy this type of banana versus this one, I mean, really, how big of a difference is that gonna make?* And now I know that it does make a difference to somebody. (Nicole, p. 11)

As a participant-observer, it was a pleasure to see Nicole engage critically with the issues of hunger and poverty and on a personal level with the individuals in the communities we visited.

Jayne is a 29 year-old female from outside of Atlanta, Georgia. She lives not far from where she grew up, but due to metro Atlanta’s rapid expansion, the demographics and area have changed greatly. She is a 5th grade classroom teacher at a moderately large (around 630 students) intermediate school. Her school serves grades 3-5, and the vast

majority of the students at her school come from one large neighborhood that surrounds it.

Even though the students are from a fairly small geographic area – it is in some ways a neighborhood school – its demographics closely align state averages. Around half of the school is White, roughly thirty percent is African American, around fifteen percent of students are Latino, and the rest of the student body is either Asian American or mixed. Because the school is fed by one large neighborhood, some students are from “nearly million-dollar homes and some kids are coming from houses that their parents are renting under, you know, Section 8 housing rules. And then we also have trailer parks feeding into us” (Jayne, p. 4). The number of students defined as economically disadvantaged is lower – thirty two percent to fifty percent - than the state average, but Jayne’s school has a higher – fifteen percent to thirteen percent - proportion of students with disabilities. Roughly seven percent of her school’s population is categorized as Limited English Proficient, which is slightly higher than the state average of five percent (County Website)

This economic, linguistic and racial diversity extends to political beliefs. There is a large (22,000 students) university nearby, and Jayne noted that professors’ children and their parents are extremely invested in the social justice issues that she explores in her classroom. However, for the most part, Jayne feels that she must remain extremely cognizant that she teaches in a conservative school: “with kids, I do feel that...I watch my wording in a certain way. Because I think one of the biggest things I...always kind of come back to and I’m always...in the back of my mind, ‘Careful what you say; careful what you say’” (Jayne, p. 4).

Even though Jayne remains mindful that she teaches in a traditionalist school, she does a variety of activities with her students to raise awareness about hunger and poverty. In November of the 2008-2009 school year, Jayne did an integrated economics unit with her 5th graders that began the discussion about hunger, poverty and care for the Earth; “we mixed our study of basic fifth-grade economics, um, with poverty issues and what people can do to help” (Jayne, p. 4). Like my other informants, Jayne integrated a service-learning component into this series of lessons. The economics unit, which lasted a month, was focused on raising awareness about social justice and instilling a sense of advocacy in her students. From the class business (selling Christmas ornaments) to the persuasive writing essays about how to use the funds raised, the goal was to raise awareness in “kids’ minds that these organizations do exist and that there are things that people can do and that there’s a world outside of, you know, their neighborhood



Figure 12: Jayne's class blog regarding their economics unit

swimming pool” (Jayne, p. 4). Her class incorporated the idea of service and Heifer into all that they did throughout that month. Students wrote and starred in a play on top of all the other activities they did as well.

In her life outside of school, Jayne described herself as extremely involved. She spearheaded a revitalization of her school’s nature trail and worked extensively with the local university’s Holocaust Education Program and Museum. Although Jayne was already committed to caring for the Earth and social justice causes, the Study Tour reinforced those notions and took it to a deeper level. Jayne particularly commented on her own personal consumption habits:

being here has made me more aware of how like wasteful I am; that I’ll go to the grocery store and buy a hundred things, and when they’re still in my pantry six months later and I realize that I never really wanted it, then it’s just chucked in the trash and that’s that. You know, just trash in general, like it’s made me more aware of how I’m living my life compared to how other people are living their lives and also how I could be living my life. (Jayne, pp. 8-9)

Jayne was a very giving informant; she was described as particularly kind and just by a friend (S. Ellison, Personal Communication, May 14, 2009).

Sherry is a 32 year-old female from Phoenix, Arizona. She is originally from Buffalo, New York, and she has lived in Arizona for the last ten years. Sherry grew up in a working class family, and much of her family’s resources went to caring for her mother, who is chronically ill. Unlike some of my other informants, Sherry possessed a more nuanced and early awareness of socioeconomic position: as a child, she had “an awareness of not having the things that people around me had and the work and things it

took to...provide food for the family and things” (Sherry, p. 1). She traces her more developed consciousness about hunger and poverty to various things she was exposed to as a child, her education and her move to Arizona. Like Hannah and Nicole, informants who live in areas with a high number of immigrant students, Sherry is extremely passionate about human rights for immigrants and meeting the needs of second language learners.

Sherry teaches third grade at a large (slightly over 1,300 students) K-8 school. Sherry described her school as affluent, and the statistics show it so. Arizona averages around fifty one percent of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, whereas Sherry’s school has only nine percent (School website). The last few years have a dramatic increase in the number of students who meet the criteria for economically disadvantaged, as Arizona has been hit hard by the current housing crisis, and Sherry noted that in years previous, students considered economically disadvantaged were almost invisible. Sherry’s school also has a significantly higher representation of White students – eighty three percent of the student body as compared to the state average of forty five percent - and a much lower population of Latino students – ten percent as compared to the state average of forty one percent. Sherry’s school is also unique in that only two percent of students are second language learners, as compared to the state average of fourteen percent (County Website).

Sherry and I had a very interesting conversation about her desire to stay in her current position. As someone who is very invested in social justice issues it can be difficult for her to broach these topics with her students or colleagues. Like Jayne, the only other informant in a more affluent school, Sherry noted that” the lines are very

narrow in my job as a teacher,” (Sherry, p. 5) and she felt that, in her school, “you can’t give your political views or your social views of anything...you have to be very careful with that” (Sherry, p. 5). However, because the school environment is so conservative, Sherry feels that it is even more important that she stay where she is, even though she might feel a little stymied by the school’s expectations:

So my goal is—uh, and it’s funny because some people would say, “Sherry, you really need to work in the inner city because if you work with a lower socioeconomic group, you could make a lot of changes.” And I said...that would be fine, but I feel like I’ve been put in the position where I’m working with...I don’t wanna say affluent community, but a higher socioeconomic community where their parents are lawyers and, and politicians and decision-makers and heads of things, and I thought if I give them the chance to have the knowledge and have the awareness, then maybe when they take those positions of leadership roles in the community, then they’ll be making more positive impacts and positive...changes instead of more narrow-minded and fearful decisions that maybe their parents or grandparents have made in the past to then affect bigger groups of people (Sherry, p. 5).

Sherry has done a range of activities with her students to help raise their awareness about hunger, poverty and advocacy. Her favorite series of lessons was called “Just One Person,” and it centered on the enormous changes that an individual can make for the betterment of their community and world. Sherry has also used the Heifer elementary curricula (See Appendix B) with her students. As with my other informants,

Sherry incorporated a service-learning aspect to these lessons; her students raised money via the “Read to Feed” program for Heifer.

Sherry is an extremely warm and emotional person. Out of all of the different participants on the Study Tour, Sherry seemed to make individuals in the communities the most comfortable the quickest. She had one of the highest levels of awareness about Latino cultural mores of anyone on the trip. She has many Latino friends in her community at home, and her boyfriend is

Mexican. One particularly touching moment on the tour was when Sherry began an impromptu dance with a Heifer project partner in one of the very rural villages we visited. As we were walking to another site, we passed by a battery powered radio playing *bachata*, a type of Latin dance.

Sherry quickly turned to the 86 year-old man that was walking beside us, and she invited him to dance. She embraced him although his body odor was strong, and he was missing part of his arm. They twirled briefly around in the dusty road. At the end of the song, both Study Tour teachers and community



Figure 13: Sherry dancing

members burst into applause. I feel that her openness was deeply appreciated by the communities we visited.

Outside of school, Sherry is extremely passionate about human rights and justice for immigrants. She has a high awareness and investment in legal, moral and ethical concerns regarding Latino immigrants without papers. She has volunteered with *No Más Muertes*, a nonprofit organization that seeks to give aid to individuals that are attempting to cross the Sonora desert, regardless of documentation status. During our first interview, Sherry was brought to tears when she described volunteering with the organization. She draws a great deal of strength and identity also from her Mennonite church, which she described as a peace church. When I questioned Sherry about what she wanted to learn from the trip, she was the only informant who responded that she wanted to become a better person. Sherry’s processing of the trip events was rooted more in her emotions, and it was extremely different than Michel’s more intellectual/academic analysis of the trip.

Each informant’s background experiences shaped the way that they negotiated and processed this professional development experience. As I read through their transcripts and worked to write up descriptions of each of them, several themes emerged. These subjects will be discussed in the next chapter.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Summary of Participants

Name	Sherry	Jayne	Michel	Nicole	Hannah
Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity	32, F, Cau	29, F, Cau	45, M, Cau	30, F, Cau	28, F, Cau
Current Position	3 rd Grade	5 th Grade	University Professor	Science Enrichment Teacher for K-5; special focus on 5 th grade	3 rd Grade Teacher & Team Facilitator (3 rd Grade lead teacher)

School District	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Urban	Suburban
Grade Level	Elementary	Elementary	University	Elementary	Elementary
Years Teaching	10	7	22	8	6
Level of Education	M.Ed.	M.Ed.	Ph.D.	B.A.	M.S.
Volunteer Background	Extremely Involved	Extremely involved	Moderately Involved	Moderately Involved	Marginally Involved
Intercultural Experience	Significant: Mexico, Europe	Significant: Costa Rica, Mexico, Great Britain, France, Germany, Iceland, Switzerland, Austria	Extensive: England, France, Thailand, Iceland, Canada (6.5 yrs), Colombia, Panamá	Extensive: México (2 yrs.), Canada, Europe	Extensive: Greece (4 mo.), England, France, Italy, Costa Rica, Caribbean
Languages	English, Some Spanish	English, Some French	English, French	English, Some Spanish	English, Some French
Informed Consent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interviews	3	3	2	3	3

Data Collection Methods

There is a wealth of data collection methods available to researchers operating within the case study paradigm. From interviews to observations to the study of archival artifacts, the case study researcher has an abundance of options (Merriam, 1998). My study focused on two forms of data collection—interviews and the examination of

artifacts. I also collected data informally through observation due to my role as a participant-researcher. By choosing these methods, I triangulated my research in order to raise its internal validity.

Triangulation is a procedure in which “multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods [are used] to confirm the emerging findings” (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). This study used two different forms of triangulation—data and methodological. Data triangulation involves the use of several founts of data, and methodological triangulation involves using several techniques in the study of a single issue or phenomenon (Janesick, 2003). There are two foci of collection.

Interviews

Interviews were structured using Seidman’s (1998) organizational framework. This approach utilizes open-ended questions that allow the researcher to gain the trust of the participants and provide the researcher the opportunity to encourage rich responses (Seidman, 1998). Questions were developed ahead of time but time and space were provided for informants to explore topics of importance to them. Seidman’s (1998) style is a “model of in-depth...interviewing [which] involves conducting a series of three separate interviews with each informant. People’s behavior becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in context of their lives and the lives of those around them” (p. 11). Interview questions focused on asking informants to describe events or tell stories about moments that were significant to them. According to Harper (2008), telling these stories inspires more thoughts and serves to stir our emotions. Researching these narratives is a form of inquiry that promotes understanding through the informants’ lived experiences (Harper, 2008).

The phases of the interview process followed the bounds of the case: one before we left, one immediately at the end of the professional development, and one two to three months after return. Appendix E offers an overview of the interview protocol; each interview lasted between thirty minutes to an hour and a half. All interviews were digitally recorded on an MP3 palm device then transcribed. The recorder was chosen for its high quality sound, ease of use and its unobtrusive size. Once interviews were completed, the lengthy process of transcription began. Meloy (2002) observes that recording and re-listening to interviews is akin to hearing them the first time. Following recommended protocol, (Bush, 2007; Meloy, 2002), I listened to the recordings multiple times throughout the transcription process. The recordings and transcriptions were securely stored on the researcher's computer. After completing the transcription process, I sent copies to the informants for member checking and clarification.

For interview one Seidman (1998) encourages the use of the life history method; the life-history method offers the researcher an "opportunity to learn about subjects' backgrounds, opinions, feelings and the meanings they give to the mundane events and exceptional experiences in their lives" (Richie, 1996, pp. 16-17). This approach is an invaluable one because this research began with informants' self concepts and their actual pedagogical practice. Interview two focused on the details of the experience (Seidman, 1998) and occurred immediately at the end of the professional development experience. Two to three months later, interview three was conducted. The time between interviews allowed the informants an opportunity to reflect on their experience and interpret meaning from it (Seidman, 1998).

According to Seidman (1998), the three interview structure is critical, as each interview has a particular purpose within the set. The longitudinal nature of this interview process served to further informants' senses of comfort and rapport with the researcher. This allowed for an "exchange of ideas" between the researcher and the informants as we "affect[ed] and influenc[ed] the other in order to derive meaning toward the questions being researched" (Harper, 2008, p. 134).

Artifacts

In addition to the interviews, I have also included artifacts from the various participating educators and the trip. Each informant was asked to submit, as they felt appropriate, copies of student work samples, lesson plans or teacher manufactured materials used that related to the issues explored during the professional development. In addition to these artifacts which originated in informants' home institutions, I have included copies of photographs taken during the trip, planning/overview paperwork, and materials used for specific professional development lessons while in Houston or Honduras. While on the trip, all grantees were asked to help create a group journal which recorded information about sites visited, Heifer programs/recipients, and individual epiphanies. I studied selections from the journal and included paraphrased information. Each of these artifacts -- photos, lesson plans, diary/journal entries, planning/overview materials, and student work examples -- enhanced data collection for the researcher and provide firsthand material for the reader as they negotiate meaning. These documents serve to support the data collected from observation and interviews, and therefore make the findings of this study more trustworthy (Glesne, 1999).

Data Management and Analysis

Data management and analysis was an ongoing, organic process. Qualitative researchers garner an enormous amount of data, and their end product must be saturated with pertinent points yet compact enough for others to find useful. To achieve this goal, the researcher must “categorize, synthesize, search for patterns and interpret the data” (Glesne, 1999, p. 130). This research followed the process of constantly rechecking past information, continuing analysis and maintaining material confidentially.

Since one of the major foci of investigation was interviews, I transcribed each painstakingly. As Glesne (1999) and Seidman (1998) encourage, I sought to keep my transcription and analysis free from presumption and responsive to what my informants communicated. The interviews were transcribed, and then the coding process began. Coding is sorting and classifying different pieces of data into themed categories to then use for theorizing. I included in these different categories pertinent artifacts to add another layer of depth. Once the organization and data analysis were complete, I began to explore the different emergent themes.

Ethical Considerations

As briefly explored above, qualitative research requires a high level of awareness in regards to ethics. The politics of interpretation and representation are highly charged, and both as a researcher and an individual, I sought to respect my informants and the research process. This research showed ethical behavior not only the interactions with informants, but also in the presentation of data. The informants were other education professionals, and while this does not eliminate questions of power, I believe it reduces them to some extent. However, it is important to remember that “research fundamentally

involves issues of power” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 66). I will now succinctly address the different ethical considerations that were considerations in my work.

Power

The question of power in qualitative research is a significant one. Two different viewpoints on this topic are especially important to my study—that of a feminist theorist and a multiculturalist theorist. I will then briefly discuss how awareness of these matters is present in my work.

Kirsch’s (1999) *Ethical Dilemmas* is an excellent book about the question of representation and interpretation in research viewed through a feminist lens. Her central concerns are “whose words—whose reality—are [we] representing in our work?” (Kirsch, 1999, p. xi). Her work challenges the traditional research approach which affords the academic all the power to determine rightness in research. Kirsch examines the history of research where scholars “studied down” and appropriated the experiences and words of others for their own benefit. While doing so, she problematizes the idea of the research process altogether. Kirsch argues that it is virtually impossible to equalize power differentials and completely alleviate the possibility of misrepresenting the experiences of others (1999).

All is not lost, however. While I do not believe (nor does Kirsch) that these questions can be solved completely, there are certain steps that we can take to mitigate the power differential that will always be present. The following steps that Kirsch (1999) recommends that researchers guide my research design, implementation and analysis. As a feminist researcher, I sought to: (a) create opportunities for reciprocal learning, (p. 3), (b) empower participants, (p. 3), (c) pay attention to every day events in order to

“valorize the lives of ordinary women and suggest the significance of daily lived experience,” (p. 4), (d) collaborate with participants, (p. 4), (e) analyze and share how my “identity, experience, training and theoretical background shape the research agenda, data analysis and findings,” (p. 5), (f) “question such valorized concepts as objectivity, neutrality and reliability,” (p. 7), (g) interview in an “interactive, non-hierarchical, and open-ended” manner, (p. 31) and, when done, and (h) communicate results. According to Kirsch (1999), feminist researchers are unsuccessful if they do not share their work with those who will benefit the most from the results.

Feminist theorists are not the only ones who have historically been concerned with the idea of representation and power in research. Multicultural theorists have also grappled with this topic. Like feminists, multiculturalists represent groups that have either been left out of traditional discourses or have customarily been Other-ized as the subjects of research. Sonia Nieto is one of these prominent multicultural theorists who have influenced my academic development. She has written several texts employing the case study method herself and encouraging others to do the same. Regarding the question of power, Nieto (2004) asks that researchers, when designing and implementing a case study, think about the following:

Before undertaking your own case studies, however, you need to think carefully about the ethics of doing this kind of research. All research is fraught with problems of intellectual integrity and case studies are no exception. Thus, for example, you need to think about your own identity and how it might influence the person you interview, particularly if she or he has an identity different from yours. What biases do you bring to the interview? How does your identity

influence your attitudes toward him? How might your voice, inflection, facial gestures or postures affect her answers? How might you inadvertently be putting words in his mouth? How might you be manipulating her thoughts? (pp. 19-20)

One way that researchers have attempted to address this issue is to include an autobiographical rationale in their studies in order to communicate to the reader some of the more obvious potential biases that a researcher may have. Glesne (1999) suggests that subjectivity and the imbalance of power in qualitative research may possibly be minimized through using various methods to raise validity such as the ones mentioned above. Even with these autobiographical rationales or an autoethnographic approach, I do not believe that we can eliminate questions of power and identity. I think, instead, that we must maintain an awareness of power, as problematized by feminist and multiculturalist theorists, while we perform our research; “despite our fondest wishes, we cannot escape the problems of interpretation and meaning, either by ignoring them or claiming to overcome them. We can only deal with them self-consciously and directly, using whatever tools we can” (Carter, 1993, p. 10).

Informed Consent

Per Georgia Southern University’s Institutional Review Board, all informants signed an informed consent form, which can be found in Appendix D. This form notified my informants of the study and showed their voluntary participation. The consent briefly covers the scope of the research, and I addressed any questions that individuals had after reading it.

Pseudonyms

In an effort to shield my informants and offer them another layer of privacy, I used pseudonyms for each individual, their home schools and their communities. Undoubtedly, the other teachers who participated in the Study Tour will be able to ascertain who each person is, however, all grantees already had access to that information, and I did not include any confidential or charged information. Individuals outside the 2009 Trip I grantees will not be able to determine the identities of the informants. Each informant chose their own pseudonym. I also used pseudonyms for all Heifer staff—either from the United States or Honduras. When I spoke of individuals in the communities, I used their correct first name as long as there was no other distinguishing information about them such as the name of their town or province.

Limitations/Challenges

There are a number of challenges when doing qualitative research in general which were plentiful in this study in particular. As briefly discussed above, qualitative research does not purport to address all problems or even all aspects of one problem. Case studies are further limited because of their close detail, which may lead the reader to flawed conclusions through the minimizing or exaggerating of the situations described in the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Due to the intense focus on the selected issues, the question of generalizability is a pertinent one. This study is clear regarding the singularity of the cases studied. Conversely, while each case studied represents a unique individual with distinct experiences, “reasoning by analogy allows the application of lessons learned in one case to another population or set of circumstances” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 105).

Another limitation of this study is that it focused on five educators involved with one program at one site. The participants were predisposed to be invested in the topic at hand; I would argue that each of them were teacher-leaders in their fields. I do not imagine that the average teacher would be willing to give up precious vacation time for a physically and mentally challenging experience in a developing country if they were not already invested in these topics.

In addition, I participated both as a researcher and as a current and former grantee of the Study Tour. While this presents the potential for a more nuanced understanding of what my informants experienced, it also presented a challenge for me not to rely too heavily on my past knowledge for existing preconceived notions. My history required that I be aware of my biases and preconceptions.

My Involvement

One of the strengths of qualitative research is the researcher themselves. By design and intention, the qualitative researcher brings their interests, strengths, drive and attention to their selected topic. I chose this topic because travel and the things learned when outside of one's comfort zone are important to me; I believe the various experiences that I have had in situations like the one studied here have made me a stronger and better person. I sought to study that process; "to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings...we want to know that which is most essential to being"(van Manen, 2003, p. 5). I am passionate about this topic and the work that Heifer International does; in my life outside of academia, I am an area volunteer coordinator for Heifer in the state of Georgia. In addition to my current volunteer choices, I spent five years of my

professional life working in community development; Heifer's mission statement is aligned with my values. Clearly, I wanted this work to be a success and to be respectful of the organization. However, I sought not to let my own biases and beliefs color this work extensively, but instead provide starting points for new thoughts.

CHAPTER 4

EMERGENT THEMES

As I worked through the process of transcription and data analysis, four themes emerged that I began to explore; these four subjects led in a slightly different direction than I had intended. When I began this dissertation, I was originally intrigued about how or if the Heifer Study Tour would affect personal and professional advocacy in a group of teachers who might not already be engaged in their neighborhoods and schools. What I found, after getting to know my five informants better, was that each of them were already successful advocates before ever leaving on the trip. Jayne, Michel, Sherry, Hannah and Nicole are all deeply committed to improving their communities and worlds. For example, Jayne spearheaded the revitalization of the nature trail at her school last year; Sherry spent several days in the desert bringing water to migrants in 2008. As evidenced by those short descriptions, my informants were already highly engaged and aware about social justice topics in their lives outside of school. As for their teaching, their pedagogical approaches all focused on including student voices and allowing students to lead their own learning.

All of that to say, however, that the Study Tour did not have an impact on these five teachers. It was just different than I had anticipated. For this data presentation and analysis chapter, I will begin by examining their histories. What brought them to this point of engagement? What happened in their past that made them aware and attentive to social justice? As I interviewed each of them, I found that every single person referred to some moment in their youth – Michel with a street child in Barranquilla or Nicole's interaction at a friend's house – that made them conscious of poverty or hunger. They

each spoke movingly and extensively, on record and off, about how that specific instance began the awareness and empowerment process for them.

However, it did not stop there. Each of my informants directly stated that their passion for social justice may have begun in a crystalline moment in their youth, but it was not understood until they explicitly learned, in school, more about systems, structures, and what each of us could do to help. As a teacher and researcher this fascinated me. This theme eloquently shows that education can make a difference in an individual's feelings of advocacy about social justice. Michel, Sherry, Hannah, Nicole and Jayne all had teachers that openly incorporated discussions about poverty into their classrooms which resulted in a more impassioned and conscious citizen.

This discussion of **Seminal Moments** as understood through education is examined through the lens of Freire and postpositivist realism. I begin with this chapter with a discussion of my informants' pasts to bring reader understanding to the (past) present of the Study Tour. From history, I move into the professional development I am investigating. The second theme I will discuss at length is *La solidaridad*, or the relationships that my informants created during site visits.

One of Heifer's lead staff spoke about our presence in the communities during a visit. She described how meals that we ate and conversations shared during time in the village became the expression of solidarity. For this theme, I will use postpositivist realism and Freire to discuss how the bonds between North American grantees and Honduran project partners grew my informants' understandings of social justice. I firmly believe that relationships and emotion feed a desire to grow a critical consciousness.

These instances of solidarity formed a new type of seminal moment that my informants will look back upon in years to come.

The bonds created by solidarity lead into a process of *Conscientização*. Freire (2005) wrote at length about the importance of consciousness building that comes from within. This theme addresses conscientization as a development and pedagogical practice. Heifer works within Freire's framework in their labors for sustainable, just development. This type of development argues that the answers to the 'problems' facing communities in Honduras (or the United States) come from within the oppressed themselves. Hooks (1994) drew parallels to Freire's original iconographic descriptions of peasants in rural and urban Brazil to disenfranchised students in U.S. classrooms to further the discussion of equity. I will discuss at length representations of conscientization as experienced by my informants in Honduras during the Study Tour and in their classrooms at home.

Beginning with seminal moments in their youth as understood via theory, my informants went to Honduras to further their knowledge and commitment to social justice. Relationships created during site visits established a sense of solidarity and emotional dedication. These feelings opened the door to conscientization. Conscientization, if followed through as intended, results in an individual fully aware of their own humanity and committed to the humanity of Others. As empowered, impassioned and informed Subjects, my informants were then able to return home with a deepened sense of their own **Advocacy**. The last subject I will explore at length returns to my original intention.

I will answer one of my initial questions before I even begin. Did this trip make my five informants advocates? Simply, no. I believe they were all already so. However,

this trip *did* deepen and redefine what hope and engagement might look like in Honduras and in their own classrooms. The individuals we met on site visits were not poor, helpless victims of fate. They all had a hand in making their lives and the lives of their *compañeros* better. They taught us volumes about advocacy and hope. Freire (2004) noted, “hope needs practice to become historical concreteness” (p. 2). The practices that we saw redefined what was possible for us. Throughout this process, postpositivist realism guided my examination of my informants’ words and experiences; it helped me contextualize a way that White, North American educators could engage with rural Hondurans and learn from them.

I see these four themes as a logical and chronological progression to a larger, coherent whole. The driving question that led me to this research was whether this professional development experience would create a sense of agency. For my five informants, I see their agency beginning in seminal moments in youth which led them to a place where they were able to engage with social justice issues. On the trip itself, the experience of solidarity led to consciousness building or conscientization. Aware, engaged and informed, the five individuals I interviewed were then able to be advocates. I see this journey to advocacy as the development of agency.

I will close this section and open the next with a quote from Freire’s (2004) *Pedagogy of Hope*. In this text, Freire looks back on the process of writing *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He describes his own conscientization. He remembers one instance when he began teaching with a deep desire to do well for and with the oppressed. However, his audiences noted that he was not quite connecting with them. Freire (2004) reminisces, “he [one of the Brazilian laborers] fixed me with a mild, but penetrating gaze, and asked:

‘Dr. Paulo, sir—do you know where people live? Have you ever been in any of our houses?’ (p. 17).

Yes. Yes, we have.

Seminal Moments

Becoming a multicultural teacher, therefore, means first becoming a multicultural person.

(Nieto, 2000, p. 338)

This research study focused on the idea of personal and professional advocacy in regards to the most pressing issues of our time. In doing it, I had the good fortune to be able to engage in a nine day professional development experience with some of the most interesting, compassionate, intelligent and introspective teachers I have ever met. The Study Tour was made up of educators from a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs. Other than my informants, we had everyone from the environmental science teacher at a boarding school for Olympic athletes to the co-chair of special education programs at a large Western high school. All of these teachers were united in their goal to make a more just world through education.

I was intrigued about the process of growing awareness and advocacy about hunger and poverty. I wanted to know what brought these teacher-leaders to the places they were today. As explored earlier in this paper, White teachers from privileged backgrounds (which could describe most of the grantees) often fail to recognize structural inequities or connect to students of different backgrounds (Banks & McGee Banks, 2001; Delpit, 2006; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2000). Nonetheless, all of the grantees demonstrated a high level of personal and professional efficacy about social justice issues and a wholehearted ability to incorporate all types of experiences in their

classrooms. My informants were exceptional in this respect. As I re-read transcripts and looked over field notes, a theme about this topic became obvious. Each of my informants all had some sort of seminal moment in their youth that crystallized the urgency of social justice concerns. However, their connection to social justice did not end there. Nicole, Sherry, Hannah, Michel and Jayne all credit their current level of efficacy, knowledge and commitment to epiphanies in their youth as understood through theory and learning. In other words, it is not enough to share a moment or have a life changing experience if you do not have the words to analyze and later interpolate it. Nieto (2000) concurs, “developing truly comprehensive multicultural education takes many years....it means reeducating ourselves...we simply need to learn more” (p. 338). I will now let my informants’ narratives explore this theme.

Jayne noted that “as a child, to some degree you’re somewhat aware that not everybody lives the same life as you,” but “I don’t think as a child, it ever extended beyond that to me” (Jayne, p. 1). That all changed for her one Thanksgiving when she was in high school. She described

I was, I don’t know, a sophomore, junior in high school. My birthday fell on Thanksgiving, and so I worked at...a homeless shelter to help serve the Thanksgiving meal, and...while I was there, some of my friends who were there with me kind of started telling people it was my birthday, and I don’t know what it was about this...moment in time, but all the people who were having their Thanksgiving dinner started singing “Happy Birthday,” and...there was something about that that kind of, that made this connection...I felt connected to

people who were in this situation in a way that maybe I hadn't before...there was [a] kind of...unity. (Jayne, p. 2)

Jayne, while she felt a sense of unity and connection in that particular moment, stated that it was not until she was older and began to study social justice topics in school that she thought that it was possible to do something about structural inequities. She continued, "I guess it was probably, like, late high school and into college that it started to seem a little bit more meaningful to me, that maybe there was something people could do about it" (Jayne, p. 1). Her time in college, in particular, was fundamental to her understanding and awareness; "being in college and learning about world issues that had always been just kind of something on the news rather than something that seemed real...[was the moment] it became more a part of my everyday awareness" (Jayne, p. 1).

Jayne's recounting of her learning process – a seminal moment combined with the theory to understand it – describe the best practices of multicultural education. Gay (2000) argues that improving schools for students of color "requires comprehensive knowledge, unshakeable convictions, and high-level pedagogical skills" (p. xviii). A well rounded university education can provide the comprehensive knowledge and high-level pedagogical skills, but I believe that it is those seminal moments, like the one that Jayne described, that give the unshakeable conviction that will sustain an educator in moments of self doubt and exhaustion. When the problems of the world seem to large, individuals can also draw on Jayne's knowledge that inequity "is something that people can do something about" (Jayne, p. 1).

Hannah was somewhat unique as compared to my other informants. The other four all had very specific recollections of early childhood memories in which they

experienced their first awareness of hunger or poverty, whereas Hannah's critical consciousness started much later than my other informants. While on the trip, Hannah mentioned some things about events in her youth that were significant to her, but during the interview, she responded that her earliest awareness was in her early twenties. This is probably due to the fact that Hannah described herself as sheltered as a child; she became aware of structural inequities first "when I started traveling and I started seeing different places and kind of getting out of my little comfort zone that I grew up in my whole life" (Hannah, p. 1).

According to Hannah, although her travel experiences were indispensable, they were not enough. Like my other informants, she linked experience to specifically learning about social justice to arrive at her current, much more nuanced and critical understanding. She chose her master's program because she wanted to learn more about hunger and poverty and how to combat it. She described being particularly touched by a class assignment about children affected by AIDS. Before that activity, she noted that she may have been touched or horrified (depending on the presentation of the information), but after learning about it, she had a way to discuss it, interpolate it and act upon it.

Her academic learning framed her travel experiences and gave her a way to contextualize them. Once Hannah understood more about structural inequities, she was able to take action to combat them. She became empowered by her schooling; "empowerment translates into academic competence, personal confidence, courage and the will to act" (Gay, 2000, p. 32). Again, the notion of a seminal moment understood by learning surfaced. As a teacher who is interested in social justice, I found this extremely significant. This means that educators have an essential role in helping students

understand hunger, poverty and environmental degradation so that they may then do something about it. Nieto (2000) echoes this point – what we include in (or leave out of) our teaching is what makes our classes multicultural or not. If we want students to be informed and active democratic citizens, we must first inform them of social inequities then help them realize they have power to address them.

Nicole recalled two different memories from her childhood that helped form her consciousness about social justice. When she was a toddler, her parents moved to Monterrey, Mexico for two years. During that time, her family had house help; upon returning home to Michigan, they were no longer able to afford to have someone come in and clean. Nicole remembered asking, “‘We had a maid? I don’t understand that; we don’t have a maid now.’ And, you know, it slowly became a realization that people might live differently in different places” (Nicole, p. 1).

From that realization at four, Nicole continued to grow an awareness of social justice. She recollected a moment when she was in sixth or seventh grade next,

I remembered going over to my friend’s house...and on her fridge her mom had a portrait of a little African boy. I asked about it. I was like, “Why do you have this picture up there?” And she said that they were giving money to this boy because this boy didn’t have any food and shelter and things like that. So that was really the first time that I realized that anything could be done about people who were in poverty, and the things that I thought could be done was that you give a quarter a day or a dime a day like you see on TV, and that’s what could be done (Nicole, p. 6)

While, admittedly, this is a very rudimentary view of poverty (as something that happens in other places), it was an important first step. Nicole recognized that poverty was a problem and that she could do something about it. In her journey from tolerance/acceptance to solidarity/critique (Nieto, 2000), Nicole felt that her time in school was important. Nicole shared in conversations with me during the Study Tour that her university education was a big reason that she feels the way she does now and influences her job. It is a pleasure for her to be a part of others' growing awareness about social justice. She described her students' reactions to a consciousness raising activity as "intense" (Nicole, p. 4). Moments like the one she portrayed with students are Nicole's motivating factor as they, like she did, move along the awareness continuum through education.

Sherry's childhood was different than the rest of my informants. The other four, either directly or by allusion, made reference to more privileged childhoods. Sherry described herself as outside of the traditional middle class stereotype growing up due to her mother's health issues. She noted that her first awareness of difference was "not having the things that people around me had and the work and things it took to, to provide food for the family" (Sherry, p. 1). Even though Sherry may not have had as much as her peers – she lived in an affluent area – she still felt a strong affinity for NGOs like UNICEF or Feed the Children. Sherry spoke of one particular vignette. As a child, she often went to New York for dance competitions and recitals. She described how

I would see a lot of homeless people, people digging in garbage cans and things, and that was, um, very hurtful to me to see not only were there on those commercials these kids somewhere else in the world, but, you know, right here in

the state that I lived in, there were also people that didn't have. I would always make sure that our leftovers and things we brought and gave to people that we would see anywhere. (Sherry, p. 1)

Sherry noted, for as much as she had an emotional connection to these moments – giving food to homeless men and women or TV commercials for international NGOs – she did not have a complex or critical consciousness of hunger, poverty or systemic injustice; “I didn't really quite have an in-depth understanding” (Sherry, p. 1).

Sherry credited her schooling experience for taking emotion and immature understanding to a more critical level. She went on,

the awareness and the education that I received [at both K12 and university levels] just helped me to see the vast differences in different countries and injustices that were happening and would cause hunger, poverty, and those kinds of things...I think that education was such a key part in my whole life to change who I am today was because of that broadening of that horizon. (Sherry, p. 1).

Because of the work that her teachers did with her, Sherry was able to capitalize on these seminal moments of her youth to come to a full and developed consciousness about social justice issues: “my knowledge has expanded tremendously...since I went to college [I gained] the understanding of more of the political aspects...or the wars or the social structures...the cultural impacts...[of] big businesses” (Sherry, p. 1). Sherry went on to say that she felt that she always had the heart for social justice, but without the knowledge gained at her church and school, she would not have been able to truly do something about changing her world. As a teacher, Sherry believes in recreating that combination of experience and knowledge with her students. She finds a great deal of self

worth and definition in her job teaching; it gives her great joy. She works for the possibility of awakening consciousness that results in empowered, joyful, engaged youth (Liston, 2001). She credits this goal of being able to do something about structural inequities with children to the education she received in school and her church.

Michel also pulled a memory from his childhood that was fundamental to his current understandings about hunger and poverty. As explored previously, Michel was the child of academics. His father received a fellowship to study in Colombia. Michel's earliest memory about structural inequities dates to that time.

I started to become aware of poverty was when I was eight years old...my father did work for the Ford Foundation...He also was a professor, and we went as a family ...to Colombia and also to Panamá...in Bogotá, Colombia, I remember being followed by beggars on the streets...I think it was when we were in Barranquilla...where I actually struck up a friendship with a street child. You know, just two eight- or nine-year-olds sort of communicating with each other by hand signals and things like that...I always remembered my experiences in Colombia...that made a huge impression on me I would say. (Michel, p. 2)

However, even with parents and life experiences that brought social justice concerns to the forefront, it was not until Michel went to college that he began to have the framework to truly understand and act about structural inequities. Michel described:

formative things started to really have some more clarity for me as I was an undergraduate and I started to take courses that dealt with global issues and learned what kwashiorkor was, and in a cultural geography class, I remember hearing about overpopulation issues and demography. (Michel, p. 2)

Michel noted that “critical consciousness changing and awareness...is a process that evolved for me over several years, many years of study” (Michel, p. 10). Unlike the teachers in Willard-Holt’s (1996) study who returned, after only a brief time abroad, sure of their status as multicultural leaders, all of my informants believe that this has been a slow, extensive and time consuming process. Nieto (2000) describes the process of achieving a multicultural view point as long and difficult. A multicultural, complex world view “implies a profound transformation of the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of teachers” (Nieto, 1999, p. 131) that only comes through study and experience.

When Michel went to college and began the complicated conversation about social justice, he was able to take the account of his encounter in Barranquilla and, through theory, arrive at an explanatory story that became the basis for advocacy in social justice. Gay (2000) notes that stories are a meaning making exercise that help us arrive at what is important to us. They help us understand our worlds (Harper, 2008). We would not have a workable understanding of our lives without the combination of experience and analysis that we share through story.

Mohanty (2000) agrees, “all experience...is socially constructed, but the constructedness does not make it arbitrary or unstable in advance” (p. 38). It may not necessarily be arbitrary, but because our understanding of experience is based upon our social locations, we need theory to help us analyze our experiences. Without theory, Michel’s experience in Barranquilla could be written off as picturesque or something equally inane even though “emotional growth is a form of epistemic training as well” (Mohanty, 2000, p. 41). Michel (and my other informants) needed experience combined

with knowledge resulted in an individual who is able to advocate clearly and convincingly about social justice.

Postpositivist realist theory explains how this could happen. Mohanty (2000) elucidates “under certain conditions personal experience yields reliable knowledge about oneself and one’s” world (p. 57). This knowledge can then be judged on the basis of its explanatory potential and determined to be accurate or flawed (Mohanty, 2000; Moya, 2000). I am particularly drawn to postpositivist realism because of its strong predisposition towards social justice in this judging process. Moya (2000) describes that, according to postpositivist realism, knowledge should be analyzed in part in “reference to....others’ well-being” (p. 14). In other words, can what I experience and understand be deemed accurate and result in the liberation of others? Hau (2000) argues that postpositivist realism combines experience with “sound intellectual praxis” to result in political action (p. 135).

Michel and I had a conversation about experience, praxis, and theory during his second interview. It had become clear by that time this theme of a seminal moment combined with education was responsible for these teacher-leaders’ heightened capacities to inspire. Throughout the trip, we had discussed several times emotion and its place in a critical professional development. Michel stated, “When you’re doing so much emoting, it’s hard to be thinking on a critical level. You know, it’s hard to be in a position where you can start talking about the accumulation of capital, international capital and about its maldistribution” (Michel, p. 10) when you are tearfully recounting the poignant visits of the day. Somehow there needs to be a balance. Those moments were vital instances where the door for understanding was opened, although critical reasoning did not follow.

Postpositivist realism discusses this. According to postpositivist realism, experience and emotion are important parts of meaning making, but, alone, they are not sufficient. My informants' recollections of moments in their childhoods where they first realized structural inequities were still embryonic until they had theory to frame their understanding. Mohanty (2000) uses Scheman's (1980) fictional Alice to describe the process of how to combine emotions and experiences with a theoretical base to provide an accurate and workable viewpoint of the world. Alice, an oppressed female, is depressed and angry after attending a consciousness raising workshop. Her feelings are, after examination via theory, determined to be legitimate and justifiable. After her participation in a feminist workshop, she is newly capable of understanding why she feels the way she does – structural and systemic inequities – to then be able to do something about it.

It is essential that theory and experience are married; experience and emotion “make possible the process of search and discovery through which [we] come to discern crucial features of [our] situation” (Mohanty, 2000, p. 41). As Michel and I closed interview two, we discussed the idea of the Study Tour as an emotional experience. By the end, we concluded that feelings were an important part, but that alone, they weren't enough: “I think [without theory] that you're missing an essential component, that this trip is about emotions and not advocacy, and this trip needs to be about advocacy because emotions fade, but advocacy becomes a part of who you are” (Michel, p. 10). When we combine our experiences, those seminal moments in which we are awakened, with theory, we become capable of advocacy. Advocacy then becomes agency, and agency

becomes emancipation (Sánchez, 2006). Emancipation and justice are my goals for my life, and it was a pleasure to see them in action.

La Solidaridad

“Those who seek to know [do so] along with others.”
(Freire, 2005, p. 93)

“*La solidaridad es una cara con mano de amigo.*”
(Solidarity is a face with a friend’s hand.)

(G. Wheeler, personal communication, June 15, 2009).

One of the most significant themes shared across

all informants was the idea of connection to the communities that we visited and relationships formed with individuals met. Even though my informants spoke little to no Spanish, each informant felt a strong tie to people that they encountered during the four days of site visits. Wilson (1993) notes connections to community, bonds to individuals and a sense of belonging are some of the most positive and common results of an experience



Figure 14: Solidarity

abroad. Interestingly, each informant mentioned by name, without prompting, at least one person who had a big impact on them although in most cases they were unable to talk easily or directly to them. I will begin this section with the experiences of each informant; I believe strongly that their narratives will inform and enrich reader understanding of this theme (Bush, 2007; Harper, 2008).

To **Hannah**, the most powerful piece of the Study Tour was the experience of creating relationships during site visits. She began the trip with an academic understanding of social justice issues, but in her own life, Hannah had little exposure or personal connection to poverty other than knowing that a good deal of her students lived

at the periphery of public life. Hannah defined herself as “not a very emotional person” (Hannah, pp. 5-6), but she felt an incredible sense of solidarity with the Hondureños we met. The apex of the trip for her was

at the end, when everybody was kind of thanking each other, and I guess we did a final prayer. People were talking. I don't remember what was said...everybody was kind of getting emotional, and I happened to look over and see Susana, one of the women from the community, who had talked about her cow earlier, and she was crying. And when I looked at her that was kind of like a transition period for me where I felt very connected to the people and to the community. Because I was kind of an outside observer in the beginning, and while I had connections before with some of the children, this was my first connection with an adult. I kind of, I went up to her and I kind of patted her back a little bit and she put her arm around me and we just sat there together cried...I was very moved by this. And I kinda took a look around and saw how, I think, everybody had a moment where they connected with somebody in that community. And I don't remember what was said at all, and I don't remember who spoke, but I just remember that connection that I had with Susana. (Hannah, pp. 5-6)

The connection that Hannah began with Susana has stayed with her. It provided a seminal moment where she felt that everyone “shared their lives together” (Hannah, p. 5). When I questioned her about what stood out in her mind about the trip, Hannah replied “community.” She was awed and humbled by the community spirit that we witnessed and participated in. Continuing, she responded that the most unexpected part of the trip was this idea of connection;

I think the thing that surprised me the most was, like I said before, the sense of community and how I truly felt like I was a part of that community, and everything that the people said to us about welcoming us as brothers and sisters...I really felt that these people truly meant every single thing that they said, and they truly appreciated us, and I think that we really appreciated them.

(Hannah, p. 5)

Hannah was able to interpolate new and more critical information about social justice issues because of the feelings of solidarity and connection that she experienced during the study tour.

Michel described his experience of solidarity in the communities as “spiritual” (Michel, p. 10). When asked about what he felt the most significant event of the trip was, Michel responded with a vignette about a particular site visit,

the moment that was most dramatic for me was when we were in Mangual and at the end, where everyone was sharing...and I saw this dog just lying in the middle, between us all, and I thought, *This dog has no idea what's going on*. You know? Because we, I felt, were sort of grooving with the people there and they with us, and we were connecting on this level that brought us together as humans. And I thought that moment sort of captured the notion of spirituality in a sort of metaphysical way for me. (Michel, p. 10)

During our conversations throughout the Study Tour, Michel expressed surprise that he felt that level of connection and solidarity with the Honduran project partners. Michel, as per his self description, tends to be more analytical, and he was slower to embrace the group's high level of emotion and excitement. Even though Michel would probably be

categorized as more reserved, he was still moved by the feeling of solidarity that he experienced.

In fact, the concept of solidarity became pivotal to Michel. All through our time in Honduras, Michel was careful to maintain a level of critical examination about the Study Tour to see if it would be something beneficial for his students, as he was entering into the planning stage with HPI central office staff. At the end of the trip he ruminated

I had reservations and have some reservations about organizing this trip with my students. You know, sort of asking the question, “Well, should we really spend all this money to travel to these sites and do that?” And the answer, resoundingly for me now, is yes, because I realize that these site visits aren’t just about us. I guess, you know, the point I’m trying to make is I felt like I knew what I was gonna see before I went, and that’s what I saw. And had you asked me beforehand, “Well, should you go then?” I might’ve said, “Well, maybe I shouldn’t go then because it’s going to meet my expectations perfectly.” But now I know the answer is, “I should go.” And my students should go. And that’s because this site business isn’t just about what we are going to learn on an intellectual level; it’s about giving people in these villages the opportunity to show us what they’ve done and the opportunity for us to connect with them so that we can really appreciate on a personal level what this [community development] is all about. (Michel, p. 8)

It was extremely important for Michel that his students feel this level of connection, to truly internalize and appreciate on a personal level what community development is all about. He considered critical and personal engagement with social justice issues the

highest goal for education; “it’s [his pedagogical goal] about becoming global citizens and becoming advocates themselves for particular issues” (Michel, p. 4).

Nicole also found that the relationships she built during the site visits were fundamental to her growing sense of social justice. Although she did not label it as such, she linked the feeling of solidarity/relationship to a deepened sense of advocacy:

There’s been a couple other points that have been very moving for me...It was...how proud they were of what they have done and how excited they were to have other people to show it to. And...There were moments in those conversations when they were talking to the group that you could just tell how proud they were...their face is glowing with pride. They’re just so happy about it, and that was, I think, really significant for me to see. Uh, because prior to that, it was just, we’re just kind of giving this away and I know it’s gonna help them and I’m sure they’re gonna be happy about it, but it’s a lot more than that. (Nicole, p. 6)

At the end of the trip, Nicole acknowledged that what she now knew was “just the beginning of the knowledge and the education that needs to happen in terms of poverty,” (Nicole, p. 8) but she returned to the States sincerely committed to capitalizing on the emotional learning that she underwent in Honduras.

As mentioned earlier, each informant recollected at least one specific individual from the communities we visited. Nicole’s memory of Alba, an older female teacher in the most remote village that we saw, was particularly poignant. Alba teaches all day and returns to work her parcel in the evenings and mornings. She is in her late fifties, and she does this without the help of a male relative. She also takes care of her many

grandchildren. Meeting her was, quite simply, awe inspiring. A small group of us separated from the rest and went to walk and talk with her, and Nicole recalled

hiking with that woman, Alba, and seeing what she has done on her own was really a powerful, significant moment for me. It's one thing to have the women stand up and have a say and have a voice, which I saw, and that was really powerful as well on different trips, but to see her do it and for her to tell us that she's doing it on her own was really significant and really powerful for me.

(Nicole, p. 6)

The connection that she shared with Alba truly resonated with Nicole. She was another informant that probably would self identify as more pragmatic and less emotional, but she was brought to tears at the end of the trip when she recalled her moments of solidarity with Alba. Alba was one of the community leaders, and during her presentation when we first arrived, Alba shared that working with Heifer had transformed her sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Speaking on behalf of her *compañeras*, she revealed to us, “*después del trabajo con Heifer, nosotros andamos diferentemente ahora.*” [After our work with Heifer, we walk differently now.] In conversations we shared on the bus, Nicole and I discussed gender equity, especially in more traditional Latino communities, like the one in which she works. Nicole's feeling of solidarity with Alba led her to say, as her closing thought at the end of the trip,

I think that this trip has empowered me as a woman to realize that I have a voice, [after reflecting on Alba's experience] and that's something that I've had since I was born, and, um, not all women have that. And all these little girls that I teach that come from a home where their mom doesn't have a voice and their grandma

doesn't have a voice, I wanna teach them that they do have a voice, and what they say matters. I see, um, I see students that don't speak in class because they don't feel like they have a voice, and I didn't really think that it was because they're a girl, but that might be part of it. And, uh, they come from this type of culture, so as a woman to a little girl who's gonna be, you know, a woman in ten years, I think it's something that I need to help them find for a lot of them (Nicole, p. 12)

For Nicole, the experience of solidarity formed a foundation for deeper critical thinking and a desire for action. Nicole, in her last interview, continued with this theme. She noted that what she learned from Alba has changed her teaching. She has a higher awareness of gender equity issues with the young Latinas in her class than before. She now seeks to make sure they have space for their own voice.

Jayne responded at the end of the trip that the most significant thing that she would take away from the Study Tour was the idea that “we're all in this together” (Jayne, p. 6). In the fight for social justice and *conscientização*, it is imperative that traditional power relationships be disbanded and individuals work together in solidarity. Jayne noted that “if you don't experience [the connection] yourself, I don't think you can ever imagine” (Jayne, p. 10) how empowering and galvanizing the power of shared work and awareness can be. Jayne was the least effusive of all my informants, but in her quiet way, spoke definitively about the “incredible” experience of sharing solidarity.

It is hardly surprising that **Sherry** would find the relationships she made in Honduras as pivotal. A self-labeled “sensitive” person, I believe Sherry already felt a high level of solidarity with oppressed peoples throughout the world. As I observed and spoke with her over the course of the nine days, I believe that a significant portion of

Sherry's self identity comes from her strong commitment to bettering the world for the exploited and subjugated. However, she responded that even though she had both the heart and the head for the types of experiences we went through on the Study Tour, she was nonplussed by the depth of her feeling and learning:

And truly, I thought I would be affected...I knew I would be affected 'cause I'm a very sensitive person, but I never imagined to this extent, and in so many different ways, I was touched so much by the people, and I know I will never forget them. And it's not just like the, you know, general people of Honduras; it's the faces and the stories and the children and the little acts of kindness... It's changed me as a person. (Sherry, p. 11)

We were given the opportunity several days to eat in the communities, and Sherry's feelings of solidarity and connection were strongly tied to those experiences. Sherry recognized that it was "a great sacrifice for complete strangers" (Sherry, p. 12) because the homes we ate in were not set up to feed thirty or more people, and the families that hosted us were clearly without extensive financial resources. I, too, must acknowledge that I was humbled and blessed by the experience of sharing a meal; I believe strongly that the metaphorical breaking of bread became metaphysical. Sherry described,

we were told that they were gonna be really honored to have us here, but I didn't expect—they just wanted to give us everything that they had, even if it was their



Figure 15: Eating on a site visit

last bit of something...to see that being really, truly displayed was really impacting. (Sherry, p. 12)

When I asked Sherry what advice she might offer future trip designers, she focused on making sure that grantees have time and space to build relationships in the communities: “I really enjoyed the days that we got to spend [on site visits]...feeling a part of the community ’cause that’s kind of the day I think I’ll take, take in my heart the most, that sense of being part of their community” (Sherry, p. 15).

Like O’Brien (2006), I found that the relationships built, even during the short amount of time spent at each site visit, were the platform for the desire to interpolate new information, grow awareness of difference and foster concern for social justice issues. Even though deepening and maintaining those relationships once grantees returned home was not possible, the brief interactions during the site visits provided a platform to begin this exploration. Freire (2005), in *Education for Critical Consciousness*, his foundational work on community development and literacy training, describes that relationships are the first step to building a critical consciousness. Once a bond is created between two people, if they work together, both of them can be changed and deepened: “knowledge is built up in the relations between human beings...relations of transformation, and perfects itself [knowledge] in the critical problematization of these relations” (Freire, 2005, p. 99). In the process of transformation, when my informants went home, like the HPI workers in Honduras and Freire’s agronomists, they could contribute to “the development of [students, campesinos or peasants] as people,” as human Subjects (Freire, 2005, p. 99). As free and humanized Subjects, both participant educators and their students can then work to improve their worlds. They are free to question, to criticize, to change.

Postpositivist realism also recognizes that knowledge building and action come through the relationships that people have with one another. Hames-García (2000) explores the liberatory potential of relationships as we redefine ourselves and our group membership. Although it is a “difficult [and] long-term...project,” it is also “transformational” to open ourselves up to others (p. 127). Even though the educator grantees and the project partners might seem to have little in common – individuals with graduate degrees communing with others who are illiterate or someone who is all alone connecting with a person with a large family – the desire to connect from both sides became a way to, at least partially, transcend class, race, gender, sexual and economic boundaries. While I do not mean to suggest that all barriers to communication/unity permanently and simply were erased over a bowl of soup, I do want to argue that, for certain crystalline moments, both Honduran project partners and grantees were able to share instants of solidarity that strengthened and challenged them as they both work, in their own ways, for social justice. Postpositivist realism notes that “emotions...[are] ways of paying attention to our world” (Mohanty, 2000, p. 37); though the shared experience of solidarity, my informants were able to gain greater understanding of social justice.

These moments surprised my informants; Michel, Sherry, Nicole, Jayne and Hannah all did not know what to expect before their first visits. Nicole described her emotions before the first site visit,

I was nervous; I didn't know how we would be received; um, I didn't know if they would be annoyed at us being there; if they would be like, “You stupid Gringos.”...I didn't know what to expect...they invited us into their home...they

really opened up to us...that initial site visit kind of took what I had expected and flipped it upside down (Nicole, p. 7)

Hames-García (2006, p. 126) speaks to this type of situation when he explores his process of building community and solidarity with other previously alienated and oppressed individuals; “although our experience was certainly not identical, there were similarities and commonalities according to which I was able to see them as my people. Thus whatever forces of domination and exploitation they faced, they faced as my people.”

As I explore this theme, I do not mean to offer some facile, self-congratulatory investigation of how White, North American educators came down to Honduras and were improved by their contact with Others in some picturesque way. As a critical outsider (I feel that having participated in the Study Tour before allowed me to bypass some of the first-time feelings and encounters to be more able to judicially analyze my informants’ experiences), I recognize that there is a danger of (re)creating colonizing relationships in this exploration of solidarity, especially because we – I as a participant-observer/researcher and my informants as affluent visitors to a developing country – hold positions of power.

In my second interview with Michel, we began a complicated conversation about some of the failings of the trip. As we discussed how the trip went, we decided that it had not been critical enough. There were some grantees (not my informants) that returned to their homes without any sense of their own culpability in structural, global inequities – this surfaced in a conversation about remittances that I will discuss later – and, for them, I believe the trip was, in terms of consciousness building, a failure. They returned to their homes with pictures, stomach problems, and a sense of self-congratulation. They missed

the point. They neglected to see that meaning making is a social process (Hau, 2000) where both parties *must* be invested in each other and in social justice. Our work and experience, as North American educators can be “legitimized only if it is linked to decolonization” (Hau, 2000, p. 142). I believe the link that gives us legitimacy, strength, and determination to work for decolonization came through these brief, imperfect experiences of solidarity explored above. Although I did not interview any of the Honduran project partners, (I believed doing so would create insurmountable questions of power) I will argue that they also experienced fleeting moments of relationship. Our presence in the communities gave space for them to take hold of ownership and their own power. These instants of solidarity were not perfect, because no human exercise is. However, they were intense, true and transformative.

Michel noted “it’s [all] about the connection” (Michel, p. 7); the bond between study tour grantees and project partners was strong. Instead of it being a one way interchange, both parties felt like they had something to offer the other. Michel explained it thusly:

I felt like we were serving an important function. I mean, they’ve, they’ve been receiving this help, and it’s their right to show the people who’ve given them the help—even though it might not be us; we’re probably both fairly small donors—but they have the right to show the people who’ve donated the money, “This is what we’ve done. And. Not only is the money not wasted, but we’re kickin’ some ass down here and takin’ names. And you go back home and tell people that we’re making this world a better place for all of us; this is about all of us (Michel, p. 8).

In our conversation about the topic, Michel and I described our experience as symbiotic, as the antithesis of a parasitic relationship where only one party receives something – be it aid, emotional benefit or information. Hannah echoed this belief:

I really felt that it was a mutual process...It was not like us feeling sorry for them, kind of going in and, like, looking at how they live and analyzing everything. It was just two groups of people who had never met each other before coming together and sharing food, sharing stories, and basically sharing our lives together. (Hannah, p. 6)

A driving concern in critical studies about service learning or experience abroad is how to transform the professional development from a one-sided venture to a fully participatory exercise in solidarity (Davidson & McCain, 2008; Weiley, 2008). Unlike something like a church mission trip, which Davidson and McCain (2008) note does little to encourage critical and complex examinations of poverty, power or advocacy, the Study Tour expressly sought to create bonds by recognizing strengths and gifts from all parties. Freire describes the former interaction as the relationship between invader and invaded; “the invader acts...the invader has his say; the invaded, who are forbidden this, listen to what the invader says” (2005, p. 103).

The Study Tour turned the “invader-invaded” relationship on its head. It made the teachers the students. When we visited the communities, we were the audience. We did not lead discussions; we did not direct conversations. Instead, after community representatives were given time and space to talk, grantees were allowed to begin a dialogue – individually or as a group – with the people we met. Freire describes dialogue as “the loving encounter of people” (2005). Through the connection of loving dialogue,

in which both sides are empowered voices, we were able to begin conversations which “present problems and criticize, and in criticizing, give human beings their place within their own reality as true transforming Subjects” (Freire, 2005, p. 110).

As autonomous Subjects, we are then free to recognize we make our own reality and that knowledge is communal and individual. Knowledge can be shared and grown through community (Hames-García, 2000; Mohanty, 2000). Hames-García (2000) describes this process: “expansion of the self can only take place once we allow groups truly *constitute* one another in such a way that their constitution is forever altered, enriched, and expanded” (emphasis in original, 126). As a participant-observer, I felt that we were all enriched by the dialogue we began; we saw that we were all members of the human community and powerful in our own way. Sherry expressed that idea – “I’ll take...in my heart the most, that sense of being part of their community” (Sherry, p. 15) – was the catalyst which reinforced her conviction that people have power as advocates: “I’ve always believed that an individual can make a big change...and I guess I saw that in action here. I always believed it but now I’ve got to see it” (Sherry, p. 13).

We, the North American educators, were blessed by what we learned and saw, and the individuals in the communities we visited were offered an opportunity to show off developed skills, improved land and bettered lives. Nicole echoed Michel’s comments about the mutually beneficial aspect of the site visits. During our second interview, Nicole remembered one of the most significant moments for her as

when the one man found out that we couldn’t go see his animals and his work and what he had done, and that made me really sad that we couldn’t go and do that...he was, you could tell he was—visibly, you could tell that he was

disappointed. And you could tell that he kinda dressed up for us that day and he had put forth a lot of effort into it and he had waited patiently, and we just couldn't go there and do that. So that was a moment for me...they really wanted to kind of show off what they had done and what they're trying to do with their lives (Nicole, p. 7)

For the communities we visited, it was a matter of pride to enter into dialogue, to share and make connections. This relationship of dialogue is “indispensable to the act of knowing” (Freire, 2005, p. 123) and acknowledges the strengths and work of each side. *La solidaridad*, the connection built when the faces came with a friend's hand and heart, resulted in communication with “a reciprocity which [could] not be broken” (Freire, 2005, p. 125). *Conscientização* provided the framework to further this connection to result in new knowledge. Postpositivist realism allows us to use that knowledge to “forge new relationships that will enable [us] to fight oppression with and for and live in harmony with more of the world's peoples” (Gilpin, 2006, p. 16).

Conscientização

Conscientização...allows individuals to assume critically the position they have in relation to the rest of the world. The critical taking up of this position brings them to assume the true role incumbent on them as people. This is the role of being Subjects in the transformation of the world, which humanizes them. (Freire, 2005, p. 99).

As I sit down to write this section, I feel the need to recognize my own involvement with and attentiveness towards this particular theme. Throughout my graduate studies, Freire's work on *conscientização* has truly resonated with me. I did five years of community development work for a school system before beginning doctoral study, and I saw firsthand the danger of ignoring and the potential of working with oppressed groups. Reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in introductory graduate classes

gave me a vocabulary and framework for realizing hope. Later seeing Heifer's work in Honduras with their project partners gave me first hand evidence of the potentially life changing power of *conscientização*. It became clear that this would be a theme when examining the idea of personal and professional advocacy with a group of teachers.

During our first workshop in Honduras, the head of *Fundación Simiente* (FS) [the Seedling Foundation], one of HPI's project partners, came to speak to us about how her organization accomplishes the work that it does. The vision of FS is that all members of society – women, men, children and adolescents – in the rural and impoverished areas where they work become conscious of their political, economic and cultural marginalization. Once aware, FS, which is funded by HPI, then works alongside communities for the defense of their rights so that they may

se convierten en actores y actoras para lograr su desarrollo y cambio positivo desde adentro. Defienden sus derechos, en la vida pública y privada a través de la incidencia política, con su identidad fortalecida, con nuevos valores, con liderazgo reconocido, con capacidades desarrolladas, con nuevas prácticas sociales, políticas y tecnológicas que promuevan y cuiden los recursos para el bienestar de las generaciones presentes y futuras [change themselves into actors to achieve their own development and positive change from inside. They defend their rights, in public and private life through political action, with a strengthened identity, with new values, with recognized leadership, with developed skills and with new social, political and technological practices that promote and care for the resources for the good of present and future generations] (“Fundación Simiente,” n.d., ¶8).

FS' mission statement is a blueprint for *conscientização*. FS is a modern manifestation of what Freire argues will change the world – a grassroots organization that works to capitalize on the strengths and power of the communities they help. I feel obliged to note that they have been extraordinarily successful, and it was an honor for me to see *conscientização* at work.

That opening workshop galvanized me. I became intrigued by the idea of *conscientização* as a development and pedagogical practice, and I began to pay close attention to conversations I had with informants – both the formal interviews and informal exchanges on the bus – about this topic. Although none of my informants had Freire's vocabulary to express it as such, *conscientização* was a driving concern for their classrooms at home as well as what we saw in Honduras.

Sherry and Jayne both spoke explicitly about using *conscientização* praxis in their teaching, although they did not phrase it with Freire's terminology. For example, Sherry described how one of her students became informed about an environmental issue, and after work done in Sherry's class about persuasive writing and a class culture which recognized the power of the individual, this third grader wrote a letter to the president. Sherry's student saw herself as a fully realized Subject, capable of affecting change for her entire state. Instead of viewing world or community problems as "a fixed entity, as something given—something to which people, as mere spectators, must adapt" (Freire, 2005, p. 139), Sherry encourages her students to draw from their own strengths and skills to be able to change their worlds. In her classroom, Sherry lets her students lead discussions and class direction. When I asked her how she was planning to incorporate what she learned during the Study Tour, she replied,

I'm assessing my climate to kind of see and have them lead and not tell them, "Hey, we're gonna do this," but kind of say, "Well, what would you like to do...?" And I think...[doing things] that way will help them feel empowered to be able to do things on their own or in their church group or their Girl Scout troop."

(Sherry, p. 13)

As shown in the quote above, Sherry believes fully in her students' ability to make decisions and take ownership of their own learning.

However, Sherry acknowledged that the *conscientização* process was a slow one, though she phrased it as "baby steps" (Sherry, p. 13). She stated her goal as a teacher: a pedagogy that works by "taking the people from where they are and moving baby steps ahead and, and growing that empowerment and that open-mindedness and that education and then moving on to the next plane as they're ready" (Sherry, p. 13). Freire (2005) described *conscientização* as the "development of the awakening of critical awareness" (p. 15). Like Sherry, Freire recognized that it is a long term, difficult process taken in "baby steps." After students (and individuals) become ready after progressing through *conscientização*, they are then able to affect change as fully realized, humanized Subjects.

Jayne, like all other Study Tour grantees, had plans to incorporate themes we discussed and information she gained with her students after her return home; in fact, this was a requirement of the grant. However, Jayne was unusual in the way she was planning her approach as compared with some of the other North American educators. Instead of going in with complete and closed set of lesson plans, which undoubtedly would be impassioned and full of information that students should know, Jayne planned to let her

students direct a great deal of their own learning about social justice. She felt that as students become involved and empowered through their own learning, amazing things could happen. Jayne's teaching is a manifestation of the practice—theory—praxis paradigm explored in Freire (2005, 2005b) and hooks (1994). Jayne's time in Honduras provided the "lived experience...[which she brought back to be] linked to processes of self-recovery [and discovery], of collective liberation" (hooks, 1994, p. 61). Again, although she did not phrase it with Freire's (or hooks') terminology, she planned to use *conscientização* techniques in her classroom as she worked alongside students for shared empowerment.

Hannah viewed teaching about social justice as a collective exercise where both teacher and students work for "freedom and justice, and by their struggle [they] recover their lost humanity" (Freire, 2005b, p. 44). Instead of an "invader-invaded" (Freire, 2000) relationship, Hannah saw her teaching as a liberatory relationship where both parties encounter themselves and truth. She commented on her desire "to bring [issues of social justice] back to the kids and kind of help them understand—and help myself understand, really, how I can be a part of helping people" (Hannah, p. 5).

Apart from her teaching, Hannah ruminated on *conscientização* as a development practice as carried out by Heifer. In her graduate studies for her master's degree in global and international education, she had read multiple case studies about development. Interestingly enough, even though Hannah was finishing her Master's degree in international education the summer of the Study Tour, she had never read any of Freire's work. Before the trip, she said she "had a very academic view of hunger and poverty and environmental degradation" (Hannah, p. 7), but she did not have a deep understanding of

what successful, culturally, ecologically and economically appropriate development might look like. During her interview at the end of the trip, Hannah replied,

I would say that I kind of went beyond that academic understanding....[now] I see [social justice] as more of people wanting to come together and fix the problems instead of, “Oh, there’s all these problems, and NGOs have to come and fix them.” And I think that all of the groups and all of the organizations that we saw working together really take on an important approach in how they assess a whole community before, before they bring in any resources and how they really want the community to organize and be the ones who make the changes and that they’re not the ones who make the changes and bring all these changes in and tell them what to do....that sense of community organization is key, and I think that’s what a lot of these international organizations and NGOs are really lacking, because they have the funds, but they’re used so inappropriately for things that, you know, that the communities may not necessarily need. For example, that was given way back with the workshop, with the three bathrooms for the one house where they clearly needed something else. And I think that the organizations that we saw really demonstrated that grassroots community-based approach I think is so important. That, when I read about that approach academically, I saw that as, okay, I think that would be something that would work, and now I actually got to see it in action and it does work, and that’s really encouraging to see. (Hannah, pp. 8-9)

Hannah portrayed the *conscientização* process as a “friendship,” where, because there is an ongoing and caring relationship, people can learn from one another. Freire (2005)

believed that dialogue, which is essential for *conscientização*, was an act of “profound love...love is an act of courage...love is commitment to others” (p. 89). Hannah returned to the United States transformed by seeing *conscientização* in action, fully committed to its use as a pedagogical praxis.

Nicole’s take on the *conscientização* process was unique, because she was the only one who spoke at length about the difficulty of awakening individuals to their full potential. She had the unique opportunity to ride with Luis, one of Heifer Honduras’ lead staff, on the way out to an extremely rural site visit. While many of the other grantees on the trip were experiencing extreme emotional highs where they saw everything and everyone as charming and beautiful, Nicole became conscious that development was not always so seamless. Luis, in his private conversation with Nicole, problematized the *conscientização* and development process; he shared with her about one family who had been given a cow. When some of Heifer’s technicians went out to visit the family during a routine check in, they found that the cow was sick; the family had not followed through on any of the training that they had received. As a result, the HPI staff took the cow away from the family until they could take care of it.

Later, in the same conversation, they passed a turn off to another village, and they talked (as mentioned, this was a rural visit) about how that particular *pueblito* did not want to have anything to do with Heifer. They were uninterested in making any changes in their lives. They had so interpolated the oppressor’s message that they did not see themselves as oppressed (Freire, 2005). Nicole grappled with their conversation even days later. Instead of accepting a facile understanding of the challenges of realizing human Subjectivity, Nicole pondered,

I think parts of the trip were a little bit high in the clouds kinda stuff in terms of the group discussing the reflection times. It was, like, *great* and everything was always *great, great, great*, which is a good thing to have, to have those positive reactions. But in talking to, well, Luis... one of Heifer's people down here, he brought up some issues, like it's not always a pretty thing. It's hard and it's really hard work. You're seeing a great side of them and this is a great time and this is, you know, what we strive for, but not all places are like this. And it can be really tough. And to change people, um, and to change their practices in terms of what they've been doing for years and years can be really, really hard emotionally for them; it can be really hard financially for them, and, um, there's some resistance to it. I think that our group maybe has panned over that a little bit, um, because we only wanna see the good that's happening with Heifer International. And not to say there's bad happening, but there is resistance to it. (Nicole, p. 7)

One of Nicole's wishes, after the trip was over, was to have seen some the *conscientização* work done in the beginning stages. She, like me, was profoundly affected by the FS workshop, and she wanted to see what the first steps to empowerment might look like. Heifer relies on the directives of the communities that they work in to decide future steps, and Nicole would have liked to have seen that aspect of *conscientização* at work. From what we saw, Nicole noted, "you can kinda get an idea of it, but I'd really like to hear what the people say and how they make these decisions" (Nicole, p. 8).

Nicole also wrestled with the idea of communities being entirely in charge of their own destinies, even when they may make poor decisions. As a fully realized human

Subject, an individual (or a community) is free to make choices, whether or not a teacher or NGO may agree with them. For example, we visited one particular community that was extremely rural and poor, and the community had made a decision to put their collective monies – part of HPI’s development practice is that communities must start small savings accounts so they can do microloans – towards having electricity instead of perhaps more immediate concerns. Nicole pondered this; she was surprised “when I saw electricity in these towns...Electricity to me, um, is more of a luxury than having food, and so it was just, it was surprising to me... the electricity, I found out, was a community decision and a community movement to do that” (Nicole, p. 9). Nicole really struggled with this choice. As someone outside of the community, it was easy for her to criticize this village’s choice.

However, Nicole recognized that experimenting and making choices is part of the learning process towards *conscientização*. Ownership of one’s destiny and authorship in life choices is the end goal of development. Freire notes that this can be a difficult and lengthy process, and mistakes are inevitable but can be redeemed: “in a concrete situation of alienation individuals may be impaired in the use of that power. Far from destroying his faith in the people, however, this possibility strikes him as a challenge to which he must respond” (2005b, p. 91). Nicole acknowledged this and made parallels to what she does in her own class;

trying new things is something that I teach my kids about all the time. ’Cause I do a lot of crazy stuff in my science class, and I always say, “Just try new things; try something new. If it’s not gonna work out, if it doesn’t happen for you, then, then you don’t have to try that again. But try this new thing; see if it’s gonna work.”

And that, if it does and they like it and it's working and they see that it's working better after this trial period of this here's my theory and then they put it into their own practice again, I think that's the whole goal. That it becomes their own. It becomes something that they've done. It doesn't become something that someone forced them to do. (Nicole, p. 12).

Nicole was affected by the workshop with FS and seeing the *conscientização* process firsthand. She felt strongly about the potential of *conscientização* as a developmental and pedagogical practice. In her final thought about this topic, she said, "I think that's [*conscientização*] a really powerful way...to help people develop in a positive way" (Nicole, p. 12).

Michel also engaged with the idea of *conscientização*, and, like the others, he did not use Freire's verbiage. In our first interview, Michel said that he believed that the answers to solving these problems [concerns of social justice], I believe, are found not in some wealth of expertise that's possessed by people with Ph.D.'s and diplomats, but rather the answers to these problems I found among the people of the world who are poor, who are facing specific issues in environmental degradation and social justice questions as well. (Michel, p. 1)

He reiterated later in that interview that the people most affected by marginalization and injustice are the most capable, knowledgeable and committed to finding solutions; that oppressed "people have the solutions" (Michel, p. 3). Michel held this belief before we left, and, upon our return, was even more steadfast in this point of view. However, his time in Honduras reiterated how difficult that this really can be. When questioned about the most important thing that he learned during the Study Tour, Michel responded,

I think the most significant thing that I took from this...is understanding, really, the degree of community organization that is ultimately behind these projects and understanding how partners work to make sure these programs are successful and how groups...work to help bring communities to the point where they can begin to engage in these projects. (Michel, p. 6)

Again, returning to the idea that Michel plans to take students on a Study Tour at some time in the future, Michel's renewed dedication about this topic was important. The study tour reinforced his beliefs about this topic and energized his future teaching. He responded that he believes strongly that students should be responsible for their own learning and own direction – “to me what's not important to get across to students is this is Problem A, and this is the solution to Problem A, but rather that...it's our job as global citizens to help people solve these problems; help them find their own solutions” (Michel, p. 1). In our last interview, Michel said that seeing and experiencing *conscientização* firsthand made him even surer that he would want to take his students.

Postpositivist realism's theoretical use of epistemic privilege makes *conscientização* possible. Instead of viewing the oppressed as without resources and incapable of adding to a dialogue, postpositivist realism explains how the experience of oppressed people can be brought to the forefront and their knowledge accorded weight and consequence. Moya (2000b) argues that “for people who have been oppressed,” epistemic privilege “can provide them with all the information” needed to analyze their experience and then act to transform it (p. 81). While Moya notes that oppressed people's understandings will necessarily be subjective, the point of view they offer is essential to

understanding “how fundamental aspects of our society (such as race, class, gender and sexuality) operate to sustain matrices of power” (2000b, pp. 80-81).

Freire (2005) describes this in action. Through literacy work and *conscientização*, it is possible for individuals to realize that they are participating and influential members of society, regardless of status. When I heard Alba say “we walk differently now,” I thought of Freire:

‘Tomorrow,’ said a street-sweeper in Brasília, ‘I’m going to go to work with my head high.’ *He had discovered the value of his person.* ‘I know now that I am cultured,’ an elderly peasant said emphatically. And when he was asked how it was that now he knew himself to be cultured, he answered with the same emphasis, ‘Because I work, and working, I transform the world.’ (Freire, 2005, p. 42, emphasis mine)

By conceding epistemic privilege to the oppressed and acknowledging that truth making is a shared venture, the street sweeper gains power to put him beside the philosopher.

Mohanty (2000) argues that “granting the possibility of epistemic privilege to the oppressed [is] more than a sentimental gesture; in many cases in fact it is the only way to push us toward greater social objectivity” (p. 58).

Macdonald concurs: “people who are at one and the same time both *oppressed by* and *central to* the continued existence of an economic, social or political system have a unique opportunity to understand and analyze that system” (2000, p. 212, emphasis in original). To return to Michel’s words, the oppressed have within them all the necessary answers to solving the social justice crisis in which they live. The Honduran Study Tour

reinforced, for my informants and myself, the strength and potential of *conscientização*, as made possible through epistemic privilege.

Advocacy

The last theme that I would like to explore in depth is that of personal and professional advocacy. The teachers that I interviewed all had extensive thoughts on this subject, and all of them believed strongly in fostering a sense of advocacy in students. At the beginning of this project, I originally set out to find if the Study Tour experience would change my informants' impressions about their self efficacy in regards to agency – which I believe is manifested as advocacy. However, I found that these five individuals were already so highly committed to the idea of moral and social engagement that the study tour did not 'change' their feelings per se but deepened them and reinforced their desire to see themselves and their students as agents of change.

To borrow loosely from Aristotle's *Physics*, with his exploration of the idea of an agent of change, my teachers saw themselves in constant contact with their worlds in the fight for social justice; they saw themselves as transformed, challenged, and renewed by this struggle. Aristotle (2008) noted that some agents of change can be changed by themselves and made stronger by this process; I feel that Nicole, Michel, Sherry, Jayne and Hannah are all excellent examples of this type of agent of change. Even though at times they have become tired or disenchanted with 'school,' they have never quit working to make their worlds a better place through education. I will now delve into my informants' views on advocacy.

Sherry spoke extensively on this topic both on a personal level and in regard to what she does with students. As explored earlier in her profile, she works at in a more

affluent school. She chooses to do so because she believes that, by her example and through her pedagogy, one day, her students will become involved in humanitarian work themselves and make decisions that are more just. She elucidated, “if I give them the chance to have the knowledge and have the awareness, then maybe when they take those positions of leadership roles in the community, then they’ll be making more positive impacts and positive, um, changes” (Sherry, p. 5). She spoke at length about a particular lesson series that she does – Just One Person – that explores the idea of advocacy. Sherry described the lesson this way: “we talk about people who are just one person and how things have come about from just one person, and it gives them that empowerment to be able to go with what they feel passionate about” (Sherry, p. 5). The conclusion of this series is the “need to be more aware of what’s going on and find what is passionate to you, and that’s how you can make your change” (Sherry, p. 5). Sherry spoke with pride of how one young lady really became excited about her potential to enact change and raised quite a bit of money for Heifer’s programs.

Outside of school, Sherry stays extremely engaged with her community. Her church, which is a peace church, greatly esteems service, and Sherry is extremely involved. She has volunteered at the local homeless shelter and with *No Más Muertes*, which takes food and provisions to individuals crossing the Sonora Desert. Sherry described her time in the desert as life changing – literally. The individuals that Sherry helped were on the brink of death, without water and without food. Sherry’s choice to help them is an excellent example of her personal advocacy. She believes strongly that one person can make a huge change in their community.

She continued with this idea after the Study Tour. In our second interview, she spoke at length about two women who both exemplify the ideal of a strong, engaged community advocate on personal and professional levels. She referred to Alba, who also greatly influenced Nicole:

I was so impressed by the one woman, the fifty-six-year-old Alba woman, and how she as an individual could make so many changes in her own community not only by being a board member, but by being a teacher, by, by, uh, working the land herself. I see, I see a lot of—I mean, I’ve always believed that an individual can make a big change, sort of like a domino effect as people catch on to what you’re doing, and I guess I saw that in action here. I always believed it but now I’ve got to see it. (Sherry, p. 13)

Linda, one of Heifer’s lead staff in Honduras, also made a huge impression on Sherry.

Linda is one of the most dedicated people I have ever met. The joke on the trip is that she knows half of Honduras and that the other half wants to know her. When we went into the communities, everyone from the oldest sage to the youngest babe referred to her as Doña Linda. Doña, in Spanish, means lady and is a title used to confer respect. Even though Linda is in leadership at the country level, she maintains a presence in the communities. As we walked about, you could hear her ask about a great uncle’s sickness and a cousin’s report card. Sherry was greatly impressed by Linda and how she did not let anything get in the way of her ability to meet people where they were and change their lives. Sherry described

I know that she does a lot as an individual. Um, how she heard about a woman who was struggling and found a way to get her some money. And, you know, she,

she stepped aside to talk to that woman and take the time, even though, technically, it didn't have anything to do with Heifer's business, she was able to, to work with that woman and show her humanity and care, and I think that sets a really good example for others to, you know, not just follow what their—I don't know how to say it, guidelines, but to be able to step out when it's right. To maybe go a little beyond what your expectations or what your restrictions might be, and take that step out because it's for the good. (Sherry, p. 13)

Sherry concluded her discussion about Alba and Linda by saying that she wanted to be like them. She felt that her way of changing the world was to do what she could where she was and encourage others to do the same. She ended with, "I'm hoping that as an individual, I can make some difference bringing this information back" (Sherry, p. 13).

Sherry demonstrates the theme of personal and professional advocacy in her engagement with her community and class.

Nicole also spoke extensively about advocacy. In her first interview, she described her feelings about engagement with the larger world and in the classroom. Her desire is to teach "about the world in general to students and to bring up" (Nicole, p. 2) social justice topics integrated into classroom content. However, Nicole believes that is not enough to only teach about those things if one does not live that way as well. In her own life, she argues that, "I think that these things should be happening at your house too" (Nicole, p. 2). She continued with "that an individual has a choice in what they do and how they choose to effect their environment" (Nicole, p. 10). Nicole chooses to affect her community at home by volunteering and raising awareness with students about social justice and environmental issues.

Because Nicole's views of advocacy are closely tied to her beliefs about education, she was extremely affected by a young teacher that we met in one of the rural communities. Lizabet is from Tegucigalpa and was posted to the countryside by the Honduran department of education after her graduation. Lizabet spoke at length about how difficult it was for her to transition from being in the city and having freedom to do what she wanted at will to living in a community of about 200. Lizabet teaches kindergarten to fifth grade all day – two shifts of students – in a one room schoolhouse. At twenty-five years old, she is entirely responsible for educating all of the youth in the surrounding area, oftentimes without promised resources from the Honduran government. When we asked her what her proudest accomplishment was, she responded that none of her students got married upon graduation. Every single child she had taught was still unmarried. While this may seem a strange point of pride, the link between poverty and adolescent marriage/parenthood is more than correlated, it is causal. It is even more significant when thinking back to the statistics about domestic violence and literacy explored in Chapter 3. Lizabet, without exaggeration, was changing her students' lives. Nicole was truly moved by their conversation. She spoke of it during our interview as an example of what advocacy could be

Another moment for me was talking to...[Lizabet] who was teaching forty students, forty-two students or something like that—I could even look it up—but she's teaching a ton of students, and the commitment that she showed with what little resources she had was incredible. And, um, just to hear about her life was amazing, and it's not necessarily how Heifer had affected her life and how Heifer International had done, but just her life as it was and how it is to be a teacher in

that kind of community. Um, she seemed like she was happy now, but in talking to her, she was not always happy to be there. And, I think it takes a lot of strength on her part to continue to educate the students with what she had and also knowing that they might not get past a fifth-grade level or, you know, high school level and to just continue to put forth that effort and to educate them. I know that was really great. And she was so young too. (Nicole, p. 7)

Nicole was galvanized by Lizabet's commitment to her students and improving the situation in that small village. Although I would categorize Nicole as highly aware of her abilities to advocate for others and social justice before she even left, Nicole credited the Study Tour with empowering her to do even more.

Michel began the Study Tour extremely committed to advocacy in both personal and professional arenas. As mentioned in his profile, he and his wife are homesteaders in Alaska, and they have chosen to live in a manner that is representative of their beliefs about personal consumption. Michel described himself as moderately involved in community service in his home town. When examining Michel's view of advocacy, his interview at the end of our time in Honduras is extremely interesting. The other grantees, and most of my informants, had made explicit statements in our closing activity the night before about how incredible the trip was and how much their lives had been changed by our time in Honduras. Michel, however, was much less effusive. While he agreed that the trip had been wonderful, he felt that it did not necessarily change anything in regards to his feelings of advocacy. He went on, "I knew before I went, both as a teacher and as an individual, what I should be doing, that I should be more involved, and I don't feel like I had any grand revelation on that level" (Michel, p. 6). In this

regard, Michel presents an interesting case. His level of personal advocacy was extremely high before the trip; therefore the Study Tour did little to develop his individual efficacy. He is one of the fortunate few who have time, ability and resources to leverage in order to accomplish personal life goals. That is not to say, however, that the Study Tour did not affect Michel. He continued, after the statement above, “I will say this, though: it strongly reinforced the beliefs that I had before I came on this trip” (Michel, p. 6).

Michel returned to Alaska energized and excited about awakening this feeling of advocacy in others, particularly in the classroom. As for his teaching, Michel spoke at length about advocacy and his students. He spoke with pride of one particular student, who took his class several semesters previous, who became so excited about her potential to make positive changes in her world that she formed a service club for Heifer at Aleut University. This individual is now in charge of Michel’s service learning component in his 101 class, and she spearheads information campaigns for the larger student body. He noted that his hope for his class was that students would become “global citizens and becom[e] advocates themselves for particular issues” (Michel, p. 4).

Jayne is also an individual with a high level of efficacy in regards to advocacy. She described herself as extremely involved in her local community. In fact, she spearheaded the revitalization of the nature trail at her school, and she volunteers frequently with the Holocaust museum at the university near to her home. Jayne traced her ability to advocate for things that she feels are important to her early childhood. She noted that, along with her growing awareness of hunger and poverty, she developed a belief that there was hope to address social injustices. As for her own life, Jayne said, “I also recognize my place in doing something to help others” (Jayne, p. 4).

Like Michel, Jayne did not credit the Study Tour with a huge change in life habits. At the end, when Jayne was reflecting on how the experience went, she circled back to her thoughts at the beginning. Before the trip, she stated, “I felt like a pretty informed world citizen. I’ve always felt like I kind of keep up-to-date with what’s going on and I do work with different organizations and that I do, you know, write letters and make phone calls and those kinds of things” (Jayne, p. 8). Although Jayne did have this high level of influence and awareness of advocacy before the Study Tour, her time in Honduras was still influential. She noted that the experience “opened [her] eyes to a lot of things that you didn’t realize you didn’t know, and so, so, I do think I’ll go back, and the reading that I do and the research that I do will be focused on some of these things” (Jayne, p. 8). The tour showed Jayne that she had some theoretical gaps in her knowledge about social justice. The professional development was successful in exciting Jayne to engage on a deeper level with these themes, and it reinforced Jayne’s beliefs about the importance of living in manner consistent with her convictions. After the statement above, she noted that “it does make me more aware of the importance of continuing to do work” for social justice topics (Jayne, p. 8). Jayne felt that the Study Tour spurred her to make “changes in my life that [will be] small and meaningful” (Jayne, p. 8).

In her teaching, Jayne works to show students that they can advocate for themselves and care for others. According to a friend, Jayne’s classroom is notable for its strong no-bullying atmosphere (S. Ellison, Personal communication, May 12, 2009). Students are taught how to then given space to co-learn and speak up for themselves. When Jayne spoke about the social justice activities that she did the year before the Study Tour, she commented “they loved it because, I don’t know, it makes kids feel like they’re

doing something, and not just because they're doing like something good for the world, but that they're involved in their learning" (Jayne, p 5). Jayne teaches social justice topics woven into the fabric of all that her class does. Learning about how to make change is not a unit in her class, it is a way of life.

Out of all of my informants, I feel that **Hannah** grew the most in regards to her own sense of advocacy. Hannah spoke repeatedly both during interviews and in informal conversations about how much the Study Tour awakened her to her potential to make change and personalized social justice issues that previously had been academic concerns. Although she works in a high-poverty school, Hannah commented that

granted, I have seen a lot of poverty where I live, but I was always outside of that. You know, see it but you don't experience it yourself; you don't talk to anybody, really. But here we went into these communities, these successful communities, and got to talk to the people about, you know, what their life was like before, how they're working to change their life and it became personal. (Hannah, p. 7)

As multicultural theorists note, frequently teachers who work in high poverty schools can fail to personalize or contextualize the experiences of their students (Banks & McGee Banks, 2001; Delpit, 2006; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Nieto, 2004). Even though Hannah was a passionate and compassionate teacher before the Study Tour, I think (and I believe that she would say the same) that she was missing the critical component of feeling, on a personal level, capable of addressing poverty. Social justice, although Hannah had learned extensively about its concerns, remained removed from her. I would argue, for as much as Hannah was committed to doing something about hunger, poverty, racism or any other inequality that she might see, she would have been ineffectual in combating social

injustice because it did not resonate truly and deeply with her. I also feel that she was not alone, nor was she an unsuccessful teacher because she lacked that. However, now that she is more aware of poverty, I believe her teaching will be able to be deeper and more powerful than before.

Before the Study Tour, I would contend that Hannah did not have a critical understanding of the interplay of social structures and how the everyday manifestations of inequity might be revealed. Without this, Hannah was not able to be an effective or engaged advocate in her home community. The trainings that we received, conversations we had and the sites we visited changed that for her. During our second interview, Hannah really wrestled with the idea of personal advocacy:

I: ...One of the questions, if you remember from the first interview... [dealt with] the difference between what a teacher does and what an individual does. So now, after this trip, what do you think about...advocacy for an individual? What they can and should do?

HANNAH: I think a lot of it came up last night, when we were all talking about the purchases that we make and just the choices that we make on a daily basis and how that can impact other people's lives. And I think as we saw the different farm projects and what products the communities are making, how important those simple products are to their livelihood. And I think on an individual level—at least personally—I'm gonna think twice about what I'm buying and where it comes from. And, you know, I thought last night about how I don't know about foreign policy and some of, um, the different regional problems depending on the countries. Like, I have a broad overview of what's going on, but I really don't know a lot about specific issues, and that's something that I

really wanna get educated about. Umm...Some of the issues that communities are facing because of the choices that Americans are making. And. Honestly, I don't know much about it, and I kind of felt last night in our conversation, *Wow, I really need to go home and think about this*. And, you know, tell other people I know about the things that I've seen and how buying certain things can help a small group of people. I thought about that as I was purchasing things while I was here as well and how I wanted to keep, you know, money in the country because they need it here and they need that support. And also politically. I don't consider myself much of a political person. I try to stay out of it as much as possible, but it is important because so many people are passive, and they just kind of go with whatever candidate sounds like they would be good, and I think that that's something I need to kind of delve in a little bit more deeply; especially on a local level, where it could make a pretty big difference. (Hannah, p. 8)

Hannah was able to arrive at these thoughts because she remained so open to learning throughout the Study Tour process; Hannah approached every interaction as an opportunity to learn. Freire (2004) noted that significant obstacles to dialogue/solidarity and learning can be overcome "the more tolerant, the more open and forthright, the more critical, the more curious and humble, [someone] become[s], the more authentically they will take up the practice of teaching" (p. 67). When I asked her to describe her pedagogy, she replied that she liked to learn alongside her kids, and together they would come to answers about social justice topics. Hannah spoke at length about solidarity and conscientization. She felt (and I feel) because she was honest about what she did not know and so sincere in her desire to learn more that she made amazing progress in growing her critical consciousness. Since returning to the States, Hannah reported

thinking about the Heifer trip nearly every day and making changes in her view of advocacy. The Study Tour expanded her mind and heart to make a great teacher an outstanding one. To borrow again from Aristotle (2008), Hannah now acts as an agent of change because she has been acted upon. She is able to be the advocate that she is (and will be) because of what she has learned. Her commitment to global education and social justice was renewed, challenged and deepened by the Study Tour, and she will now be an even more effective agent of change.

I began the data analysis section by discussing seminal moments in each informant's youth. These moments, as understood by theory gained through education, made them the teacher-leaders they are. The Study Tour experience took them from the places they were and through feelings of connection and solidarity advanced their process of *conscientização*. Once better informed, more aware and tied to the struggles of oppressed groups, they gained the ability to become even more effective advocates. The Study Tour process can be understood through the theoretical framework of postpositivist realist theory. Postpositivist realism explains how we can "better understand negotiate the social world. [It] enable[s] us to engage with the social world and in the process discover how it really works. [It] also make[s] possible for us to change the world and ourselves in valuable ways" (Martín Alcoff and Mohanty, 2006, p. 6).

I have used Freire and postpositivist realism to analyze the words and experiences of my five informants. Both Freire and postpositivist realism theorists see education as a process of liberation, of hope. Hope is founded in reality as it is and reality as it could be. Hope takes the voices and experiences of oppressed groups and gives them epistemic privilege. Hope opens the door to critical engagement with marginalized peoples and

creates a way for a dialogue of love. Through solidarity, dialogue and hope, it becomes possible to change our worlds.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

I would like to start my conclusion by stepping back towards the beginning of this dissertation research. While doing the enormous task of gathering together information for my literature review, I read Phillion et al.'s (2008) excellent article about experience abroad inadvertently serving to further White privilege. Their critique was one of the only criticisms that I found among the multitudes of papers addressing teachers' experiences in other countries, and the only one that directly addressed hidden structural inequities. The issues raised in the text remained in my mind while preparing to go and while conducting research; they guided my inquiry. Their work was similar in many ways to mine in structure. They examined how a brief study abroad in Honduras influenced a group of White, middle class teachers. They found that, regardless of the program's intent, their informants returned to the United States completely unaware of White privilege. Their time in Honduras reified subconscious beliefs about race and power. I would like to begin my ending by returning to questions raised in that article and examine the Study Tour through their lens.

Poverty

Phillion et al. (2008) describe, in some depth, two teachers who participated in their Honduras study abroad. Julie and Sophie, like my informants, returned to the United States extremely excited and touched by their brief time in Honduras. However, Julie and Sophie failed to understand poverty as a national or international concern. Sophie, when questioned about poverty in the United States, replied, "well I guess we do have a lot,

especially with the hurricane [Katrina] victims” (Phillion et al., 2008, p. 378). Sophie’s ignorant words gave me pause, and I designed two interview questions around this topic. I wanted to see whether my informants were able to contextualize poverty inside the United States and elsewhere.

Unlike Sophie and Julie, Michel, Hannah, Sherry, Jayne and Nicole all were aware of poverty in the United States. Nicole and Hannah both work at high poverty schools, and Sherry described her youth as lower middle class. Not including histories and present jobs, my informants each discussed their understandings of North American poverty. Michel spoke at length about how, while the United States in some respects was an enormously wealthy country, it still “has some of the highest rates of poverty and low human development scores indices, if we’re going to quantify and things like that, but, of course, by the standards of, um, Honduras, it’s quite well, well off” (Michel, p. 1).

Hannah noted that, in the U.S., “we tend to kind of push [poverty] under the rug and kind of pretend that it doesn’t exist” (Hannah, p. 2). I see Hannah and Michel’s comments as linked; these two explain why Julie and Sophie may have said the things they did. I believe that poverty is as Nicole described, even though she was aware this was not the case; in the United States, we tend to “think more like inner city, homeless, living on the street, trying to get food by using a cardboard sign, that kind of stuff” (Nicole, pp. 1-2). We have this image because we do not discuss social injustices in a coherent, integrated way in our schools even though, as Michel noted, a great number of our students live in poverty. Nicole, Sherry, Jayne, Hannah and Michel were able to overcome, to some extent, the White blindness that Phillion et al. (2008) and Sleeter

(2000) discuss because they did have teachers who unflinchingly, with an eye towards empowerment, brought social justice issues up in their classes.

In this discussion of poverty, it should be noted that while my informants were aware of high levels of poverty in the United States, they all noted that it would be manifested differently in industrialized and developing countries. All informants

answered, to the question of poverty in the United States, that it was pervasive, but that there are services to help individuals in need. They noted, correctly, that countries like Honduras



Figure 16: Discussions of Poverty

do not have the wherewithal to provide the range of services that families in poverty in the United States might receive.

Additionally, the idea of poverty was explored explicitly in one of the workshops we attended in Honduras. Linda, one of HPI's Honduras staff, split us into groups and posed a series of questions for each group to address such as: What is poverty? What is development? What is an outsider's role in development? Etc. My group (not all my informants) was assigned the question "what is poverty?" We ended up dividing poverty into four different categories – poverty of necessity (the traditional view of poverty—lack of clothing/food/shelter), spirit, power or knowledge – and exploring how some

individuals might be wealthy in some categories and poor in others. While some people may have great economic wealth, they may be very spiritually poor. Others may not have lots of goods, but have a wealth of knowledge and strength of spirit. Poverty can transcend location and history. I believe this discussion put us in good stead to be able to understand what we saw and experienced during site visits. I would contend that Phillion et al.'s (2008) professional development would have been improved by this type of activity.

Power

Phillion et al. (2008) also discuss the issue of power when a group of wealthy, educated North Americans enter into rural, impoverished communities in Honduras. Julie, Sophie, and their peers were accorded great respect in the villages they visited. Their treatment conformed to their expectations and reinforced their subconscious beliefs about their own privilege. When they went into the communities, they were perceived as the possessors of power and treated accordingly. The Hondurans deferred to their presence. This resulted in the inevitable “reinforcement of White Privilege...[and represents the] peril of such programs” (Phillion et al., 2008, p. 367).

As I look back over our time in Honduras, I can see how this could have been a concern if the Study Tour had been structured differently. As discussed earlier in this paper, the site visits were set up to make the teachers the learners. Honduran project partners led our time in communities. We did not direct any of the activities. This arrangement turned, as I discussed earlier, the “invader-invaded” (Freire, 2005) paradigm on its head.

Another unique aspect of the presentations in the communities related to their topic. The project partners, many times, spoke at length about agroecology practices. The North American educators, for the most part, were unaware of cultivation and farming techniques; the Hondurans were clearly the established authorities on these topics. I remember with humor one particular exchange. After one farmer had given his presentation, Beth, one of the North American grantees, raised her tremulously. When he called on her, she asked him a question anyone with any exposure to animals would already know. The entire audience of villagers exploded with laughter at her very rudimentary question. With a great deal of patience and jesting, the Hondurans explained basic animal husbandry to Beth. She listened with great seriousness and responded to the teasing with a smile. This particular interchange worked as a fantastic ice breaker in this community, and Beth became quite a favorite with that farmer. I feel that by making the teachers the students, the Study Tour sought to equalize the power differential.

Macdonald (2000), a postpositivist realist theorist, explains how this could happen. When the project partners became the leaders/teachers and the North American grantees became the students/followers, these “cultural identities [of teacher/student] serve[d] an invaluable epistemic function in the process of developing ethical judgments” (p. 210) about power, place and potential. Epistemic privilege, one of the key markers of postpositivist realism, affords traditionally marginalized groups (like the rural Hondurans) autonomy and agency. While Heifer did not deliberately structure the Study Tour with postpositivist realist theory in mind, their philosophical view of development aligns with the central tenets of postpositivist realism. Heifer and, by extension the Study Tour, argues that oppressed (or impoverished) peoples have unique points of view about

poverty and oppression, and they have the tools and potential to address those inequities (Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2000b).

As I write about this topic, I do not mean to blithely gloss over the tremendous question of power in these situations. However, I do feel that the project partners were in a slightly different position than the individuals that Julie and Sophie may have visited. Returning to the idea of conscientization as a development practice, one of Heifer's goals (possibly the most significant) is awakening their project partners to their own power. HPI seamlessly integrates self-esteem aspects into their lengthy training process. Project partners are taught how to advocate for themselves on a local, municipal and country level as a part of their involvement with Heifer. While undoubtedly we were considered honored guests – and possibly revered to an uncomfortable level – I do not think that any of the individuals who spoke with us felt subservient to us. As stated before, I believe that our presence in the communities was symbiotic.

Learning

I believe that Phillion et al.'s (2008) greatest and final concern with an experience abroad for teachers was that there was inadequate learning before, during and after their time in Honduras that would help these teachers understand, interpolate and act for social justice. Phillion et al. (2008) argue that the way to address this is “ongoing reconfigurations of the formal on-site curriculum” (p. 380). Returning to the idea of education and seminal moments, Julie and Sophie would have benefited from specific/structured schooling on topics of poverty and Whiteness as Jayne, Michel, Hannah, Nicole and Sherry did.

Weiley (2008) argues that coherent, deliberate, and critical learning can move individuals from feelings of charity into solidarity with oppressed groups. Julie and Sophie (and, by extension, their students), were lessened because of their decontextualized sense of self; I would argue that they would not be able to be effective teachers in today's inevitably multicultural classrooms without understanding Whiteness and privilege. Weiley (2008) writes of explicitly addressing privilege and power in her teacher education classes. By the end of the term, Weiley notes that students demonstrated a clear shift in their thinking about social justice. My informants, after the nine day professional development experience focused on social justice, did not have a shift in their thinking but more of a deepening/recommitment to their understanding of the topic.

Of all of the concerns explored here – poverty, power and learning – I feel that this one offers the most pertinent criticism of Study Tour. We learned so much in Honduras about development, hope, solidarity and conscientization. However, we did not have a single, explicit discussion about privilege and responsibility. Earlier in this paper I made a reference to a conversation about remittances overheard on the bus; I will now discuss it at length.

A few days before the trip ended, Annalise and Beth, two of the North American educators, began a conversation about the concept of remittances and the Honduran and U.S. economies. This is hardly surprising because the summer of the trip the United States government was wrestling with a failing economy as a result of the housing crisis. Everyone on the trip knew someone who had been personally affected by a lost job, home or savings; discussing the economy was commonplace. Annalise and Beth were no

different than the thirteen other teachers on the trip. However, their dialogue was distinctive. In their conversation the topic of remittances came up. Again, this was not surprising, because we had discussed the importance of remittances to the Honduran economy. According to a workshop we attended, 1 in 7 Hondurans have left the country to find work elsewhere. The vast majority of these individuals are now in the United States; the money that they send home in the form of remittances is an enormous influx of badly needed cash for the Honduran economy (G. Wheeler, Personal Communication, June 13, 2009).

In their discussion of the topic, Annalise and Beth began to condemn remittances. They argued that Hondurans should stay in their home countries – (North) Americans needed American jobs. There was no trace of awareness that they benefit from an unjust economic system that has essentially enslaved immigrants to ensure that the middle and upper classes enjoy cheap food, clean houses, cut lawns and new construction. Phillion et al. (2008) describe this perfectly when they note that Julie returned “without her having developed an accompanying sense of the political dimensions of poverty’s origins and her place of privilege within them” (pp. 375-376). Annalise and Beth had no idea. What is more, they were incensed on the behalf of a caricatured North American worker.

I believe that Annalise and Beth returned to the United States missing an essential component of the Study Tour. While they undoubtedly “learned a lot,” they did not learn the most important thing – everyone is lessened when we benefit from the marginalization of others. Interestingly all of my informants responded that they thought we should have had more direct teaching about social justice when I questioned them on what they would improve. Jayne requested reading that she could have done before the

trip to lessen her steep learning curve. Michel wished that our discussion times had been less about how beautiful each day was and more about systems and structures. Sherry was enraged when she overheard Annalise and Beth's conversation and wanted the group to have extensive conversations about immigration.

Jayne said it best when describing why she would have liked more critical, structured learning. She ruminated on our discussion times at the end of each day. These sessions were very open and unstructured. Jayne said,

I was almost irritated by the way people were presenting things, because it kind of sounded like we had gone to a zoo and we like were seeing the animals for the first time and we were like shocked that they could do tricks and I thought that was so silly because people acted like so surprised that these people were using such amazing farming practice[s]...[some grantees had an attitude that] people who live in impoverished areas don't know how to do anything. (Jayne, p. 10)

The lack of frank, unambiguous conversations about privilege and place was, in my opinion, the greatest weakness of the Study Tour.

Moya (2000) argues that the "ability to take effective steps toward progressive social change is predicated on an acknowledgement of, and a familiarity with, past and present structures of inequality—structures that are often highly correlated with categories of identity" (p. 8). The stated goals of the Study Tour were to mature teachers' awareness of social justice and equip them to teach about hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. Without the critical component of an examination of White privilege, I (and postpositivist realist theory) would argue that the Study Tour will not completely meet its objectives.

Eyler and Giles (1999) note that there are “Five Cs” for successful cross-cultural learning about social justice. They are connection, continuity, context, challenge and coaching. The Study Tour offered many opportunities for the North American grantees to connect with the Honduran project partners. I discussed this in length as *la solidaridad*. However, I feel that that the Study Tour was ineffectual with the other four. There was not a framework set up for continuous reflection upon our return. During our trip, we did not have explicit conversations about structural inequities for us to put the poverty we saw in context. Lastly, because Heifer’s approach to development – both for teachers and project partners – is more shepherding than driving, the grantees were not challenged to face their beliefs about White privilege. Since they were not challenged, they were not coached on how to process and combat our subconscious stereotypes. Although I hesitate to speak authoritatively about Heifer’s rationale for this attitude, I believe that HPI trusts in the innate goodness of its grantees and transformative experience of the Study Tour to address this concern. If the Study Tour were to integrate principles postpositivist realist theory and candid, critical discussions about privilege, I argue that the experience would be even more powerful.

I did not discuss this great weakness earlier at length because I believe my informants were already wrestling with concepts of White privilege and responsibility. However, the lack of open discussion was pertinent. Weiley (2008) noted that “good intentions \neq good service-learning” (p. 308); I will extend that a step further. Good intentions \neq good learning without a critical eye to systems and structures. The problem, as Phillion et al. (2008) noticed, is that now Julie, Sophie, Beth and Annalise believe that they do know. They have experienced a Study Tour and now feel that they can speak

with some authority on the subject of hunger or poverty. They have returned, but they have not returned any deeper.

Findings and Implications

This purpose of this study was to trace the socioemotional and pedagogical development of five educators before and after a brief professional development experience abroad in order to gain a better understanding of how experiential learning might influence personal and professional advocacy. Increased feelings of empowerment for teachers could result in better learning outcomes for their students. The questions of advocacy particularly addressed here related to social justice. Teachers prepared and knowledgeable about hunger, poverty and environmental degradation could create an effective, world changing new generation. To reiterate, my research questions were:

1. In what ways do the participants view themselves as agents of change before and after their time in Honduras?
2. How does this experience change their ability to address issues of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation?

I used the case study method (Bush, 2007; Nieto, 2004) to gather and present my informants' narratives about their learning during their time in Honduras with Heifer Project International. Each informant had a unique voice and a distinctive point of view about their trip. They came from varying backgrounds – a university professor, third grade teacher, elementary science enrichment coordinator, fifth grade teacher and third grade lead teacher – and locations – Alaska, California, Florida, Georgia and Arizona. They represent a sum of fifty three years in education. Their personal histories are as varied as they are. Some grew up in rural areas; others had childhoods in urban centers.

Some grew up privileged and cosseted. Others grew up on the edge of lower middle class. Regardless of where they came from, these five individuals are teacher-leaders today. They represent a high level of knowledge and commitment to education.

As I came to know them and analyzed the data gathered through interviews, observations and artifacts, four themes emerged. The first begins to answer research question one. Michel, Sherry, Hannah, Jayne and Nicole were advocates before the trip even started. They teach with an eye towards social justice in the ways they run their classes and in the subject matters they cover. In their personal lives, they volunteer and attempt to live in a manner consistent with their beliefs about care for the Earth and Others. They traced their ability to do these things to **seminal moments** in their youth as understood through education. Postpositivist realism explains how theory-mediated knowledge takes our experiences and gives us a way to contextualize, use and understand them (Moya, 2000).

Postpositivist realism shows a “way humans [can] develop reliable knowledge about themselves and their world” so that “we might act in the service of progressive social change” (Moya, 2000, p. 19). Postpositivist realist theory offers oppressed groups epistemic privilege, recognizes that experience is valuable but not definitive, acknowledges that social location influences experience, and uses theory to determine the accuracy of our understanding. Postpositivist realism accounts for how my informants’ descriptions of events in their formative years could be combined with education for social justice to provide a workable framework for advocacy in their personal and professional lives.

During and after the Study Tour, two other themes emerged. My informants described the most significant experience of the Study Tour to be *La Solidaridad*, or solidarity. Jayne, Hannah, Sherry, Nicole and Michel all were greatly impacted by the relationships created during site visits. The personal aspect of getting to know another person who is also struggling for social justice, a *compañero* with which to begin a dialogue of love (Freire, 2005), was foundational to furthering my informant's understandings of their ability to advocate with and for Others. *La solidaridad* is symbiotic, with both sides growing and learning from each other. Weiley (2008) notes that reciprocity is a key component to solidarity. I used Freire and postpositivist realism to explore how we may learn from those that appear so different than us once a relationship was built.

Open and engaged with Others, my informants began to wrestle with the idea of *Conscientização* (Freire, 2005) as a development and pedagogical process. I believe that the relationships made and the solidarity between Honduran project partners and North American grantees opened the door to a consciousness building process. I explored above that the Study Tour failed to explicitly address concerns about White privilege. However, we had great freedom on the bus in our interactions with each other to discuss these topics. Hannah, Jayne, Nicole, Sherry, Michel and I all discussed, at varying lengths, issues about systemic inequities and social justice; their viewpoints furthered my own understanding of this topic. It was a fortuitous accident when my five informants self-selected to participate that they would be so engaged and involved with these ideas. Their viewpoints deepened this research, and their narratives were invaluable. Postpositivist realism and Freire offered a lens to evaluate my informants' words as they wrestled with concepts of social justice in Honduras.

My last theme returns to the original research question. The seminal moments in their youth as understood by knowledge prepared them to go on this Study Tour. Once on the trip, their experiences of solidarity led them to a process of conscientization. Aware, knowledgeable, conscious, and committed, my five informants returned with a heightened sense of **Advocacy**. They are even more capable now of teaching, inspiring, changing and growing. While the Study Tour was in some ways a failure – particularly in regard to challenging assumptions about White privilege – my informants show it a success. Like Nicole, Michel, Sherry, Jayne and Hannah, I am renewed and committed to working for social justice after my time in Honduras with Heifer Project International.

Limitations

A salient concern anytime qualitative case studies are used is generalizability (Bush, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Harper, 2008; O'Brien, 2006). My informants and their experiences are unique. Even Group II, who went to Honduras the week after we returned, would not have the same encounters as Hannah, Sherry, Nicole, Michel and Jayne. Heifer works to make sure that different communities are visited each time they offer a Study Tour, and regardless of location, each moment will be interpreted by different people in different ways. My theoretical framework, postpositivist realism, speaks to this limitation. Moya (2000) notes that individuals are greatly influenced by their experiences, and those experiences are unique to each person.

Additionally, this research does not purport to offer a blueprint for consciousness building across the board. I did, however, want to explore how this professional development affected social justice awareness with these five teachers to be able to make some parallels to a larger audience while acknowledging the limitations of this format.

O'Brien (2006) addresses this concern in her work on an international professional development:

Would another group of teachers have the same learning outcomes? No, but having worked in the field of study abroad for many years, I believe that a different group of teachers would have similar learning outcomes...It is extremely difficult not to grow and change as a result of this type of experience. (p. 169)

It was also a difficult challenge, as a feminist researcher, to assume ownership of others' words and experiences. Although I sent transcripts back to informants, maintained contact with them throughout this time, and made every reasonable effort to decrease the power differential in our relationship, I am the one representing them. I am drawing conclusions and making findings of their narratives. I hope and believe, as I conclude this research, that I have done a responsible job of this.

Final Thoughts

In one of the workshops in Honduras, a Heifer staff member described to us what the point of their organization is: "it's not about giving a cow, it's about recognizing dignity." To extrapolate from that, I believe teaching is not about giving (passing or sharing, depending on your attitude) information, it is about recognizing the potential of each child in my classroom. It is about igniting their love of learning and sense of advocacy. I truly mean that. While not every child, unfortunately, has left my class with a more critical eye towards systems and structures, some have. Not every student leaves my classroom surer of themselves and their capacity to change their worlds but a handful will. This dissertation has afforded me the opportunity to look back over my personal and

professional career and trace the events that have brought me to my current state. As I write about Michel, Hannah, Sherry, Jayne and Nicole, I am writing also about myself.

When I first went to Honduras in 2007, I had no idea how much my life would be changed by what I saw and experienced there. While it was not my first seminal moment, it has been one of the most important times in my life. I do not mean to gush, or as Michel would warn, “emote,” but I do want to reiterate and close with my belief that a professional development, well done, can change a teacher and a person. The Study Tour challenged me, both in 2007 and 2009, to do more at home. I returned the States more committed to speaking up and out about injustices I saw and see. I live in a more sustainable manner. I make purchases with an eye to economies and place. I speak to friends, colleagues and committee members about what we do. I teach differently. I can speak confidently that my informants are the same. I want to thank everyone – from my committee who supported the research to the Heifer staff who led the development to my family who cared for my daughter while I was gone – for this unique, enriching opportunity to study others and, by extension, myself.

REFERENCES

- Abram, F. Y., & Cruce, A. (2007). A re-conceptualization of reverse mission for international social work education and practice. *Social Work Education, 3*(17), 3-19.
- Adelman, C., Jenkins, D., & Kemmis, S. (1976). Rethinking case study: Notes from the second Cambridge conference. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 6*(3), pp. 139-150.
- Alcoff, L. (2001). Objectivity and its politics. *New Literary History, 32*, 835-848.
- Apple, M. (1995). *Education and power*. New York: Routledge.
- Arendt, H. (1993). *Between past and future*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Aristotle. (2008). *Physics*. (Trans. R. Waterfield). (3rd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Ayers, W. (2004). *Teaching toward freedom: Moral commitment and ethical action in the classroom*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Banks, J., & McGee-Banks, C. (Eds.) (2001). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (4th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Baldwin, S., Buchanan, A., & Rudisill, M. (2007). What teacher candidates learned about diversity, social justice and themselves from service-learning experiences. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*, 315-327.
- Benton, J., & McWilliams, S. (2007). Children at risk in education (CARE): A transatlantic partnership programme that develops global competencies through international experience. In L. Hufford & T. Pedrajas (Eds.), *Educating for a worldview: Focus on globalizing curriculum and instruction*. (pp. 115-128). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

- Betts, S. C., & Norquest, J. (1997). Professional development for educators through travel to Zimbabwe: One year follow-up. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 89(1), 50-54.
- Brennan, S., & Cleary, J. (2007). Promoting reflection during overseas student teaching: One university's story. In K. Cushner & S. Brennan (Eds.), *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*. (pp. 159-177). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Bush, L. (2007). *New voices in the old south: Latino immigrant students' experiences at one Georgia middle school*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgia Southern University.
- Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-12.
- Casale-Giannola, D. (2000). The meaning of international experiences for the professional development of educators. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2008). Honduras. Retrieved June 16, 2008 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ho.html>.
- Cross, M.C. (1998, April). *Self efficacy and cultural awareness: A study of returned Peace Corps teachers*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Cushner, K. (2007). The role of experience in the making of internationally minded teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 27-39.

- Cushner, K., & Mahon, J. (2002). Overseas student teaching: Affecting personal, professional and global competencies in an age of globalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6(1), 44-58.
- Cushner, K., & Brennan, S. (2007). The value of learning to teach in another culture. In K. Cushner & S. Brennan (Eds.), *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*. (pp. 1-11). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Cushner, K., & Mahon, J. (2007). The impact of overseas student teaching on personal and professional development. In K. Cushner & S. Brennan (Eds.), *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*. (pp. 57-87). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Davidson, J., & McCain, T. (2008). Developing multicultural sensitivity through international student teaching: The challenges faced by a southern university. In T. Huber-Warring (Ed.), *Growing a soul for social change: Building the knowledge base for social justice*. (pp. 163-176). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom* (2nd ed.). New York: The New Press.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2003). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 1-45). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Eng, B. (2008). Narratives of experience: Crossing cultures, crossing identities. In T. Huber-Warring (Ed.), *Growing a soul for social change: Building the knowledge base for social justice*. (pp. 27-43). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

- Engle, L., & Engle, J. (2003). Study abroad levels: Toward a classification of program types. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 9, 1-20.
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Faulconer, T. (2003, April). *These kids are so bright! Pre-service teachers' insights and discoveries during a three-week student teaching practicum in Mexico*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Flournoy, M.A. (1994, June). *Educating globally competent teachers*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Council on International Education Exchange, Washington, D.C.
- Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. (R. Barr, Trans.) (3rd ed.) New York: Continuum Books.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Education for critical consciousness*. (M. B. Ramos, Trans.) (2nd ed.) New York: Continuum Books.
- Freire, P. (2005b). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (M. B. Ramos, Trans.) New York: Continuum Books.
- Fundación Simiente. (n.d.). Fundación Simiente. Retrieved September 12, 2009 from <http://www.aci-erp.hn/main/uploads/files/SIMIENTE.pdf>.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ganihar, N.N. (2007). Educating for global citizenship and social responsibility. In L. Hufford & T. Pedrajas (Eds.), *Educating for a worldview: Focus on globalizing*

- curriculum and instruction*. (pp. 129-136). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Gilpin, L. (2006). Postpositivist realist theory: Identity and representation revisited. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 8(4), 10-16.
- Giroux, H. (2003). *The abandoned generation: Democracy beyond the culture of fear*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Gollnick, D., & Chinn, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.
- Gray, K. S., Murdock, G. K., & Stebbins, C. D. (2002). Assessing study abroad's effects on an international mission. *Change*, 34(3), 44-52.
- Grobman, L. (2003). Postpositivist realism in the multicultural writing classroom: Beyond the paralysis of cultural relativism. *Pedagogy: Critical approaches to teaching literature, language, composition and culture*, 3, 205-225.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Hames-García, M. (2000). "Who are our own people?": Challenges for a theory of social identity. In P. Moya & M. Hames-García (Eds.), *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 102-129). Berkley, California: University of California Press.
- Hanvey, R. (1976). *An attainable global perspective*. Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations.

- Harper, N. (2008). *Cultural aesthetic experience: Perceptions of learning developed through cultural immersion*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgia Southern University.
- Hau, C. (2000). On representing others: Intellectuals, pedagogy, and the uses of error. In P. Moya & M. Hames-García (Eds.), *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 133-170). Berkley, California: University of California Press.
- Heifer Project International. (2009). *2008 annual report*. Retrieved May 5, 2009 from <http://www.heifer.org/atf/cf/%7BE384D2DB-8638-47F3-A6DB-68BE45A16EDC%7D/2008%20Annual%20Report.pdf>
- Heifer Project International. (2009b). *Heifer study tour for educators*. Retrieved May 5, 2009 from <http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.4860643/>
- Heifer Project International. (2009c). *Why teach when you can inspire?* Retrieved March 31, 2009 from <http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.485589/>
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York: Routledge.
- Hufford, L. (2008). An introductory reflection: An essay reconceptualizing democracy education. In T. Huber-Warring (Ed.), *Growing a soul for social change: Building the knowledge base for social justice*. (pp. 103-117). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- International Baccalaureate. (2009). *IB Fast Facts*. Retrieved August 2, 2009 from <http://www.ibo.org/facts/fastfacts/>

- Janesick, V. (2003). The choreography of qualitative research design: Minutes, improvisations and crystallization. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 46-79). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Johnson-Hunter, P., & Risku, M. (2003). Paulo Freire's liberatory education and the problem of service learning. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 2, 98-108.
- Jurasek, R. (1995). Using ethnography to bridge the gap between study abroad and the on-campus language and culture curriculum. In C. Kramsch, (Ed.) *Redefining the boundaries of language study* (pp. 221-249). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- Kids Can Make a Difference. (2006). Hunger facts. Retrieved June 9, 2008 from <http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/hunfa.htm>
- Kirsch, G. (1999). *Ethical dilemmas in feminist research: The politics of location, interpretation and publication*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Kissock, C. (2007). Foreword. In K. Cushner & S. Brennan (Eds.), *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*. (pp. v-ix). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Levine, M. H. (2005, April). *Putting the world into our classrooms: A new vision for 21st century education*. Washington, D.C.: Progressive Policy Institute.
- Liston, D. (2001). *Joy as a metaphor of convergence: A phenomenological and aesthetic investigation of social and educational change*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Macdonald, A.A. (2000). Racial authenticity and white separatism: The future of racial program housing on college campuses. In P. Moya & M. Hames-García (Eds.),

- Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 205-225). Berkley, California: University of California Press.
- McDonald, B., & Walker, R. Case study and the social philosophy of educational research. In D. Hamilton, D. Jenkins, C. King, B. MacDonald, & M. Parlett (Eds.), *Beyond the numbers game*. London: Macmillan.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1999). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Martín Alcoff, L., & Mohanty, S. (2006). Reconsidering identity politics: An introduction. In L. Martín Alcoff, M. Hames-García, S.P. Mohanty, & P.M.L. Moya (Eds.), *Identity politics reconsidered* (pp. 1-9). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Menzel, P. & D'Aluisio, F. (2005). *Hungry planet: What the world eats*. Berkley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Merryfield, M. (2000). Why aren't teachers being prepared to teach for diversity, equity and global interconnectedness? A study of lived experiences in the making of multicultural and global educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16., 429-443.
- Mohanty, S.P. (1997). *Literary theory of the claims of history*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mohanty, S.P. (2000). The epistemic status of cultural identity: On *Beloved* and the postcolonial condition. In P.M.L. Moya & M.R. Hames-García (Eds.), *Reclaiming*

- identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 29-66).
Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Moya, P.M.L. (2000). Introduction: Reclaiming identity. In P.M.L. Moya & M.R. Hames-Garcia (Eds.), *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 1-26). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Moya, P. (2000b). Postmodernism, 'realism,' and the politics of identity: Cherríe Moraga and Chicana feminism. In P. Moya & M. Hames-García (Eds.), *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 67-101). Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline (2009). *Abuse in America*. Retrieved November 13, 2009 from <http://www.ndvh.org/get-educated/abuse-in-america/>.
- National Education Association (2003). *Status of the American public school teacher 2000-2001: Highlights*. Retrieved June 30, 2008 from <http://www.nea.org/edstats/images/statushighlights.pdf>.
- Nieto, S. (Ed.). (2000). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (3rd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Nieto, S. (Ed.). (2004). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Nunan, D. (1998). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Brien, K. (2006). *The convergence of the global and the local: What teachers bring to their classrooms after a Fulbright experience in Kenya and Tanzania*. Ed.D.

dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst, United States --
Massachusetts.

Orr, D. (1992). *Ecological literacy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Partners for a Prosperous Athens (2006). *Poverty and the economy in Athens*. Retrieved
June 30, 2008 from

<http://www.prosperousathens.org/poverty/index.html#poverty>.

Pearson, L., Fonseca-Greber, B., & Foell, K. (2006). Advanced proficiency for foreign
language teacher candidates: What can we do to help them achieve this goal?
Foreign Language Annals, 39, 507-520.

Pence, H. M., & Macgillivray, I. K. (2008). The impact of an international field
experience on preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 14-
25.

Phillion, J., Malewski, E., Rodriguez, E., Shirley, V., Kulago, H., & Bulington, J. (2008).
Promise and perils of study abroad: White privilege renewal. In T. Huber-Warring
(Ed.), *Growing a soul for social change: Building the knowledge base for social
justice*. (pp. 365-382). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Putnam, R., & Borko, H. (2000). What do new views of knowledge and thinking have to
say about research on teacher learning? *Educational Researcher*, 29(1), 4-16.

Quezada, R., & Alfaro, C. (2007). Developing biliteracy teachers: Moving toward
cultural and linguistic global competence in teacher education. In K. Cushner &
S. Brennan (Eds.), *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*.
(pp. 123-158). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

- Razzano, E. (1996). The overseas route to multicultural and international education. *The Clearing House*, (69), 268-270.
- Richie, B.E. (1996). *Compelled to crime: The gender entrapment of battered Black women*. New York: Routledge.
- Rossman, G., & Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sánchez, R. (2006). On a critical realist theory of identity. In L. Alcoff, M. Hames-García, S. Mohanty & P. Moya (Eds.). *Identity politics reconsidered* (pp. 31-52). New York: Palgrave.
- Sandgren, D., Ellig, N., Hovde, P., Krejci, M., & Rice, M. (1999). How international experience affects teaching: Understanding the impact of faculty study abroad. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 3(1), 33-56.
- Scheman, N. (1980). Anger and the politics of naming. In S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker, & N. Furman (Eds.). *Women and language in literature and society*. (pp. 174-187). New York: Praeger.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sleeter, C. (2000). Diversity vs. white privilege. *Rethinking Schools*, 15(2), Retrieved March 28, 2009 from http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/15_02/Int152.shtml.
- Sleeter, C., Hughes, B., Meador, E., Whang, P., Rogers, L., Blackwell, K., Laughlin, P., & Peralta-Nash, C. (2005). Working an academically rigorous, multicultural program. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 38, 290-298.

- Stake, R. (1981). Case study methodology: An epistemological advocacy. In W. Welsh (Ed.), *Case study methodology in educational evaluation*. Proceedings of the 1981 Minnesota Evaluation Conference. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Research and Evaluation Center.
- Stake, R. (2003). Case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 134-164). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Stier, J. (2003). Internationalisation, ethnic diversity and the acquisition of intercultural competencies. *Intercultural Education*, 14(1), 77-91.
- Tevlin, J. (2007, March 11). Going abroad: An ode to international travel. *Star Tribune*, p. G1.
- Thompson, G. (2002, March). *Teachers studying abroad: An analysis of changes in linguistic and cultural knowledge and attitudes toward the Spanish culture and effects of ethnographic interviews*. Paper presented at the TexFlec Conference, Austin, TX.
- Tiedt, P., & Tiedt, I. (1995). *Multicultural teaching: A handbook of activities, information and resources*. (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Tye, K. (1991). Introduction: The world at a crossroads. In K. Tye (Ed.), *Global education: From thought to action*. (pp. 1-9). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision Curriculum Development.
- UNICEF (October 21, 2003). New study shows that one billion children suffer effects of poverty. Retrieved June 7, 2008 from http://www.unicef.org/media/media_15082.html

- U.S. Census Bureau (2004, June 29). *High school graduation rates reach all time high: Non Hispanic White and Black graduates at record levels*. Retrieved November 13, 2009 from <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/education/001863.html>
- U.S. Department of Education (2005, August 30). *Educating for success in the 21st century: K-16 partnerships in global education*. Retrieved May 2, 2008 from <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/k16-partnerships.html>
- van Manen, M. (2003). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Ontario: The Althouse Press.
- Weiley, K. (2008). Seeking solidarity through global and indigenous service learning. In T. Huber-Warring (Ed.), *Growing a soul for social change: Building the knowledge base for social justice*. (pp. 295-344). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Weisbrot, M., Baker, D., Kraev, E., & Chen, J. (2001). *The scorecard on globalization 1980-2000: Twenty years of diminished progress*. Center for Economic and Policy Research.
- Wheeler, T. (2004). *Heifer project, Honduras*. Presented at a Heifer U lecture in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.
- Willard-Holt, C. (2001). The impact of a short-term international experience for preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 505-517.
- Wilson, A. (1984). Teachers as short term international sojourners: Opening windows on the world. *The Social Studies*, 75, 184-192.

- Wilson, A. (1986). Returned Peace Corps volunteers who teach social studies. *The Social Studies*, 77(3), 100-107.
- Wilson, A. (1993). Conversation partners: Helping students gain a global perspective through cross-cultural experiences. *Theory Into Practice*, 32(1), 21-26.
- Wilson, A., & Flornoy, M.A. (2007). Establishing and maintaining an international student-teaching program. In K. Cushner & S. Brennan (Eds.), *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*. (pp. 13-33). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Wolcott, H. (1981). Confessions of a “trained” observer. In T. Popkewitz & B. Tabachnick (Eds.), *The study of schooling*. (pp. 247-263). New York: Praeger.
- Woods, T. (1999). *Beginning postmodernism*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Wu, R. (2007). A pedagogy for building a justpeace global civil society. In L. Hufford & T. Pedrajas (Eds.), *Educating for a worldview: Focus on globalizing curriculum and instruction*. (pp. 15-28). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Young, R. (2001). *Assessing the impact areas of an international study tour for teachers*. Master’s thesis, Five Colleges Partnership. Retrieved March 30, 2009 from <http://www.fivecolleges.edu/partnership/sea/masterthesis.pdf>

APPENDIX A

HEIFER STUDY TOUR APPLICATION



STUDY TOUR FOR EDUCATORS

2009

Application

This program is oriented towards teachers/educators/educational volunteers who will be able to provide local and regional support for Heifer's School Programs. For this particular program, teachers, administrators, and other educators are invited to apply for a grant from Heifer which would include: international air transportation; land transportation in country; accommodations and meals; Heifer project visits and resource materials. Continuing Education (CEU) credit will be available for all participants. Some pre- and post- trip commitments will be expected of all participants since the program is designed to train participants for leadership roles in the school programs in your area. For more information on this program, please contact Sarah Tourville, Coordinator of Community Education, sarah.tourville@heifer.org or 501-907-2615.

This tour has two sessions:

Session 1: June 11-20, 2009

Session 2: June 20-29, 2009

****Applications are due March 16.****

Please mail applications to:

Attn: Sarah Tourville

Heifer International

**1 World Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202**

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell
Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Current Status (i.e. teacher, administrator, retiree, etc.): _____

Workplace (if applicable): _____

Education: _____

Relevant Work Experience (Please be specific): _____

Have you applied for the Study Tour for Educators before? Yes No

Please indicate your session preference: Session 1: June 11-20 Session 2: June 20-29

Can you be flexible with your session preference? Yes No

What is your understanding of the message/mission of Heifer International?

What do you see as the primary purpose and value of Heifer Education programs for the school system?

Discuss your involvement with Heifer's work in your local community. Specifically, what experience(s) have you had using Heifer's educational materials in a school setting?

**Have you ever worked, volunteered, or had contact with your regional office?
Briefly explain.**

On a separate sheet of paper, please answer the following questions:

1. In what ways can you integrate this experience into your district, local school, school system, or classroom in the coming year?
2. What would you be willing to do to assist your region in promoting Heifer's school programs as a result of this program?
3. Please provide any additional information which you feel would be relevant in your application to this program.

Applicant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Study Tour for Educators, 2009

Selection Criteria

In order to qualify as a candidate for consideration, all applicants must fill out the application form in its entirety and return it by March 16, 2009.

Notifications concerning program acceptance will be sent out the week of March 30, 2009.

Any questions regarding the application should be directed to Sarah Tourville, Coordinator of Community Education, at 501-907-2615 or sarah.tourville@heifer.org.

Expectations of Participants

All selected participants will be required to complete pre- and post-trip commitments. Agendas will be available prior to each trip.

Grant

The educational grant covers: international air transportation, land transportation in country, accommodation and meals, Heifer project visits and resource materials. The grant does not include domestic transportation to the departure city or any incidentals such as souvenirs, gifts, snacks, etc.

Dates

Session 1: June 11-20, 2009

Session 2: June 20-29, 2009

APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW OF HPI CURRICULA

Overview of Heifer's Global Education Resource Kits

Heifer's Elementary School Programs provide resources for teachers to use with their students in teaching about issues related to global hunger, poverty, and environmental degradation.

Each Free Global Education Resource Kit contains

- Beautifully illustrated children's book, which creates the basis of the lessons
 - The books were written by Page McBrier, author of best seller *Beatrice's Goat*
- 3 DVDs
- Brightly-colored map of the region of geographic focus
- Classroom poster related to the content of the lessons
- Standards-based lessons, developed with the Center for Teaching International Relations at University of Denver
- Service-learning and fundraising ideas
- Helpful instructions for educators

Each level addresses themes related to Heifer's work and focuses on different geographic areas in which Heifer works.

- **PreK & K: Animals Helping People, People Helping Animals**
 - Book: *The Chicken and the Worm* by Page McBrier
 - Geographic region: Americas – North America - Urban gardening

- **Grades 1 & 2: We are connected – People working together**
 - Book: *Beatrice's Goat* by Page McBrier
 - Geographic Region: Africa - Uganda

- **Grades 3 & 4: People and the Environment** Available late March 2009
 - Book: *Winter in Songming* by Page McBrier
 - Geographic Region: Asia/South Pacific - China

- **Grades 5 & 6: You and Your Community** Available late March 2009
 - Book: *Once There Was and Was Not* by Page McBrier
 - Geographic Region: Central/Eastern Europe - Armenia

Action Ideas help teachers incorporate service learning.

- The popular **Read to Feed** fundraiser now includes additional service ideas to strengthen the impact of the activity.
- **Art for a Cause** encourages students to learn about and create visual representations of themes related to Heifer's work
- **From Farm to Plate** encourages students to learn about their local food systems.

HeiferEducation.org is a site for educators.

This site includes lessons, activities, videos and other resources for use in (and outside) the classroom. It also provides unique teaching tools targeted to national standards that combine learning about the causes of and solutions to hunger and poverty with important geography, world cultures, science, math, economics and other knowledge

GET IT! Global Education To Improve Tomorrow

Grades 6 and up

Overview of Heifer's Get It!

Get It![®]: Global Education To Improve Tomorrow is a curriculum-based global education and service-learning program that teaches middle and high school students about sustainable solutions to world hunger and poverty.

Teachers can use GET IT! to teach students about their roles as consumers and the effects their choices have in the global marketplace. Originally designed for grades 6-8, Get It! has been adopted by high schools and even some colleges and universities, as well as middle level educators.

Each Free GET IT! Leader's Packet contains

- GET IT Curriculum/Lesson Plan guide, with standards-based lessons, developed with the Center for Teaching International Relations at University of Denver
- Chores for Change booklet with information about service learning and fundraising ideas
- Student Reporter's Notebook
- GET IT! Leader's Guide with helpful instructions and additional resources for educators
- Brightly colored Poster with Map of North America and Latin America and facts about trade of coffee, bananas, and cut flowers
- GET INVOLVED Donation Form and sample Sponsor Envelope
- Heifer International Bookmark

Each Free GET IT! Student Packet contains

(Note: Student Packs come in quantities for 5 students or 100 students)

- Student Reporters Notebook
- Chores for Change booklet
- Sponsor Envelopes
- Bookmark

Topics addressed in the Curriculum/Lesson Plan Guide

- Trade between North American and Latin America
- The commodities of coffee, cut flowers, bananas.
- Information about the products, the history, and the people

Content areas addressed in the Lesson Plans

- Geography
- Science
- History
- Economics
- Language Arts

Lessons are flexible— independent and modular. That is, teachers do not have to use all lessons or use them in order. The lessons will still make sense if they are taught one lesson at a time, one unit at a time, or from cover to cover.

Through the lessons and with the use of the Student Reporters Notebook, the topics and information are delivered in the context of investigative journalism. Students become investigative consumer reporters and write about the issues related to international trade, as well as hunger, poverty and the environment. This delivery method helps students develop a variety of skills:

- reading comprehension
- writing for a particular audience
- high-level thinking
- research strategies

What is Chores for Change?

Chores for Change is a program of service and learning:

serving people in need in your community AND learning about the world, yourself, and how to make a difference.

Participants volunteer time working at an established hunger-fighting organization or initiative, such as passing out food at a soup kitchen or collecting cans for a food bank. Each participant recruits sponsors to pledge donations for time spent in volunteer activities. Participants collect the donations and send them to Heifer International to help fight world hunger.

APPENDIX C
EMAIL SOLICITING PARTICIPANTS

Hello everyone!

I want to pass on to you a message from one of your trip-mates. Polly participated in our Study Tour for Educators program in 2007 and will be accompanying us again this year as a translator. Additionally, she is working on her doctoral degree. Polly is conducting research during our trip and I hope you'll be willing to help her out. The information she gathers will also help Heifer as we improve our educational offerings and professional development opportunities for educators like you. I hope you will take a minute to read her e-mail below.

Thanks so much-- look for another e-mail from me this week!

Jen Girten

Manager of School Programs

Heifer International

931-636-2674

From: polly holder [mailto:holder.polly@gmail.com]

Sent: Mon 4/27/2009 7:56 AM

Dear Study Tour Participant,

My name is Polly Holder, and I am going to be traveling with you this summer with Heifer to Honduras. I'm really looking forward to meeting you and our time there. In addition to serving as a translator for the group, I will be gathering data for a research project. I am interested in learning about if and how Heifer's Study Tour changes educator self perception or practice in regards to social and environmental justice issues.

I am contacting you to see if you would be interested or willing to participate in the study. Participation would include three interviews and possibly a visit to your school/home institution.

Please let me know if you would be willing or interested in participating. My email is holder.polly@gmail.com and/or my cell is 678-873-9819. Due to time constraints, I will only be able to work with about five people. In the event that I have more positive responses than spaces, not everyone will be chosen. (Although your intended kindness will be greatly appreciated.) I am very grateful for your time and consideration.

Looking forward to meeting you in Houston,
Polly

APPENDIX D

IRB PAPERWORK

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-478-0843 Veazey Hall 2021

P.O. Box 8005

Fax: 912-478-0719 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Polly Stewart Holder

2005 Whitney Rd

Monroe, GA 30655

CC: Charles E. Patterson

Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees

(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: May 18, 2009

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H09259** and titled “**Different Latitudes, Different Attitudes: Educator Narratives of a Professional Development Abroad**”, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes

Compliance Officer

Instructions: *Please respond to the following as briefly as possible, but keep in mind that your responses will affect the actions of the Board. Clearly label your responses in sections that correspond to the specific information requested. The Narrative should*

include a step by step plan of how you will obtain your subjects, conduct the research and analyze the data. Make sure the narrative clearly explains aspects of the methodology that provide protections for your human subjects. You may insert your responses in each section on this page in bold text, leaving a space between the question and your answers. Narrative should not exceed 5 pages.

*The application should be submitted electronically (email attachment) or sent to the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs, at P. O. Box 8005, Statesboro, GA 30460, fax (912) 478-0719, and should contain, in this order: a signed cover page (fax, pdf or mail), the project proposal narrative, signed copy of certification of investigator responsibility (CIR) (fax, pdf or mail), human subject training certificate (within the last 3 years), and the informed consent that you will use in your project., the informed consent checklist (optional) Additional information, such as copies of survey instruments, letter of cooperation from institutions where subjects will be accessed (e.g., public schools), advertisements, or any instruments used to interact with participants should be attached at the end of the proposal clearly designated as an Appendix. **For electronic submission:** First complete the proposal narrative in entirety and “Save As” a word document to your computer or disk named “lastname, First initial _propnarr_Year_Month_Date.doc”. Open and complete cover page. Email all documents to IRB@georgiasouthern.edu. Documents that require signature may be faxed to 912-478-0719, mailed or uploaded in PDF. (Electronic submission is not required.)*

Personnel. *Please list any individuals who will be participating in the research beyond the PI and advisor. Also please detail the experience, level of involvement in the process and the access to information that each may have.*

Five educators serving in a variety of positions will be involved with this study. Each potential informant will be interviewed before the Study Tour in Houston, TX, at the end of their time in Honduras, then in the fall of 2009 in their home towns. The interviews will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed, and each participant will have complete access to their transcript to review the accuracy of the information. Each participant will be given a pseudonym for themselves and their home institutions for the purpose of confidentiality. Only the principal investigator, informants, and the committee chair will have access to the tapes. Follow up interviews will be scheduled as needed to clarify information. Interview data will be triangulated through the use of observations and artifacts. The principal investigator will collect observations

during the Study Tour and in home institutions, as possible. Observational data will be recorded as field notes for data analysis. The researcher's role will be that of participant-observer throughout this process.

Purpose. *1. Briefly describe in one or two sentences the purpose of your research. 2. What questions are you trying to answer in this experiment? Please include your hypothesis in this section. The jurisdiction of the IRB requires that we ensure the appropriateness of research. It is unethical to put participants at risk without the possibility of sound scientific result. For this reason, you should be very clear on how participants and others will benefit from knowledge gained in this project. 3. What current literature have you reviewed regarding this topic of research? How does it help you to frame the hypothesis and research you will be doing? Include citations in the description.*

The purpose of this multiple-case study is to describe the influence of a professional development experience abroad focused on social and environmental justice issues on the self perceptions and actions of five educators. Additional sub questions are:

- 1. How do these individuals conceive of themselves as advocates regarding social and environmental justice topics?**
- 2. How does their perception of their advocacy play out when working with students before and after this professional development experience?**

Current scholarship explores the impact of study or professional development abroad on teacher socioemotional domains as well as capacity to deliver content in their classrooms. Studies show that teachers who participate with professional development or studies abroad return to their classrooms and self identify as more patient, flexible and committed to their careers and students (Benton & McWilliams, 2007; Casale-Ginnola, 2005; Cushner, 2007; Betts & Norquest, 1997; Davis & McCain, 2007). Post trip, educators also describe themselves as more compassionate, engaged, and aware of multicultural issues (Faulconer, 2003; Willard-Holt, 1996; Cushner & Mahon, 2002). Colleagues and students are also able to note a difference in teachers who have returned from a professional development abroad (Cross, 1998; Sandgren et al., 1999). In addition to increased emotional and social competencies, teachers returning from professional development/study abroad have reported significant gains in their classroom pedagogy. Educators who have participated in an experience abroad are far more likely to use target language and culture in their classrooms, clear up misconceptions about studied populations and interact more positively with students (Razzano, 1996; Wilson, 1984; Young, 2001; O'Brien, 2006).

While these different studies have investigated the fields above, there is a gap in the literature about how a professional development relates specifically to teacher self perception and understanding of social and environmental justice issues. Understanding and exploring teacher narratives will offer insight to others in the field, educator professionals and academics about adult learning regarding these crucial topics.

Outcome. *Please state what results you expect to achieve? Who will benefit from this study? How will the participants benefit (if at all). Remember that the participants do not necessarily have to benefit directly. The results of your study may have broadly stated outcomes for a large number of people or society in general.*

The principal investigator hopes that this study will shed new light on teacher perspectives of advocacy while recognizing that it will not be generalizable across groups. The results should also offer Heifer Project International (HPI), the sponsoring institution, systematically recorded, scientifically structured feedback about their professional development approach. In addition, the principal investigator hopes that this study will provide its participants an opportunity to further reflect and examine the HPI Study Tour professional development experience. By contemplating and exploring self perspectives, the researcher hopes that the participating educators will be able to more fully interpolate and use information gained during the experience for the benefit of their students.

Describe your subjects. *Give number of participants, approximate ages, gender requirements (if any).*

Describe how they will be recruited, how data will be collected (i.e., will names or social security numbers be collected, or will there be any other identification process used that might jeopardize confidentiality?), and/or describe any inducement (payment, etc.) that will be used to recruit subjects. Please use this section to justify how limits and inclusions to the population are going to be used and how they might affect the result (in general).

Data will be collected from five of the fifteen educators who received the Heifer Study Grant. The participating individuals come from a wide variety of professional and geographic backgrounds. There are no age, gender, racial, socioeconomic or sexual orientation requirements for participation in this study. Three in-depth interviews (of an hour to an hour and a half) will represent one of the three data collection methods utilized in this study. The questions in the

interview protocol (Appendix A) are designed to elicit information regarding each informant's perceptions about their capacity as advocates of social and environmental justice as well as their general thoughts on those topics. To create confidentiality, names of informants and their home institutions will be replaced with pseudonyms. Each interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. Participants can (and may be asked to by the principal investigator) review their transcript at any time. As needed, the principal investigator will also follow up via email or phone to clarify or expand on information shared in the transcripts. Observations of the grantee educators will take place during the Study Tour and, as possible, in their home institutions. In addition to observations and interviews, artifacts will provide a third data collection method. No sensitive information—social security numbers, teacher IDs, etc.—will be collected from informants.

Only five of the fifteen participants will be selected for this qualitative case study. Qualitative research utilizes a small sample size because larger generalizability is not the focus. The principal researcher will not use any inducements to recruit potential informants. The informant selection process will begin with an email (Appendix B) to all Study Tour grantees briefly introducing the researcher and the project sent out by the tour leader who is Heifer International staff. Any individuals interested or willing to participate will contact the principal investigator directly. If more than five grantees respond, the principal investigator will then narrow the selection based on the brief autobiographical sketches given to Heifer staff and the original grant applications. Guiding criteria for selection includes: 1.) Diversity—of location, professional position, background, etc; 2.) Availability—of informant's location and the openness of their home institution; and 3.) Exceptionality—if something in the biographical sketches or applications seems distinctive to the researcher.

Letters of informed consent will be mailed to the potential informant to obtain written consent. Upon receipt of signed forms, data collection will begin in Houston, Texas before the departure of the Study Tour.

Methodology (Procedures). *Enumerate specifically what will you be doing in this study, what kind of experimental manipulations you will use, what kinds of questions or recording of behavior you will use. If appropriate, attach a questionnaire to each submitted copy of this proposal. Describe in detail any physical procedures you may be performing.*

During the course of this study, the following procedures will be utilized to gather data about the influences of a professional development abroad. In-depth

interviews will be scheduled at a time and location that is convenient for each informant within the framework (before, after, 2 months after). Prior to each interview, the interview protocol (Appendix A) will be provided to each informant. All interviews will be digitally recorded then transcribed. All informants will be provided a copy of the transcription at their request or at the behest of the principal investigator to check for the accuracy of data and to make any necessary revisions. Observational data will be collected by the principal investigator during the course of the professional development in Honduras and, as possible, in the informants' home institutions upon return. Field notes will be used to record behaviors/attitudes/etc. seen. The principal investigator will also ask informants, as desired or appropriate, to borrow any pertinent artifacts (student work samples, lesson plans, teacher developed materials, etc.) used to teach students about the issues explored during the professional development. Data will be organized for analysis, split into categories using coding and presented via images, narrative and any other figures/tables deemed pertinent by the researcher. The results of the emergent themes will be used to explore the ways that the HPI professional development in Honduras is processed and interpolated by informants.

Special Conditions:

Risk. *Is there greater than minimal risk from physical, mental or social discomfort? Describe the risks and the steps taken to minimize them. Justify the risk undertaken by outlining any benefits that might result from the study, both on a*

participant and societal level. Even minor discomfort in answering questions on a survey may pose some risk to subjects. Carefully consider how the subjects will react and address ANY potential risks. Do not simply state that no risk exists. Carefully examine possible subject reactions. If risk is no greater than risk associated with daily life experiences state risk in these terms.

There are no known risks, other than those normal to everyday life and/or travel, anticipated for participants in this study.

Research involving minors. *Describe how the details of your study will be communicated to parents/guardians. If part of an in-school study (elementary, middle, or high school), describe how permission will be obtained from school officials/teachers, and indicate whether the study will be a part of the normal curriculum/school process.*

Please provide both parental consent letters and child assent letters (or processes for children too young to read). If not applicable indicate N/A or delete this section.

This research does not involve minors.

Deception. Describe the deception and how the subject will be debriefed. Briefly address the rationale for using deception. Be sure to review the deception disclaimer language required in the informed consent. **Note:** All research in which deception will be used is required to be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board. If not applicable indicate N/A or delete this section.

This research does not involve deceiving the participants.

Medical procedures. Describe your procedures, including safeguards. If appropriate, briefly describe the necessity for employing a medical procedure in this study. Be sure to review the medical disclaimer language required in the informed consent. If not applicable indicate N/A or delete this section.

This study will not employ any medical procedures.

Cover page checklist. Please provide additional information concerning risk elements checked on the cover page and not yet addressed in the narrative. If none, please state "none of the items listed on the cover page checklist apply." The cover page can be accessed from the IRB forms page. (Note – if a student, make sure your advisor has read your application and signed your cover page. (Your advisor is responsible for the research you undertake in the name of GSU.)

None of the items listed on the cover page apply to this study.

Reminder: No research can be undertaken until your proposal has been approved by the IRB.

Dear HPI Study Tour for Educators Participant,

My name is Polly Stewart Holder, and I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. As part of my degree requirements, I am required to design and implement a study about an educational phenomenon. My dissertation is titled *Different Latitudes, Different Attitudes: Educator Narratives of a Professional Development Abroad*. This study is focused on learning about how educators view themselves as advocates regarding social and environmental justice topics and if and how their perception is altered after participation in a professional development program focused on those issues.

This letter is to request your permission to participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time by informing me either verbally or via email/mail. If you give consent, you will have the opportunity to participate in three interviews that should range from roughly one to one and half hours. One interview will be conducted in Houston, Texas before the Study Tour for Educators leaves for Honduras in June of 2009. The second interview will take place immediately after the professional development experience ends. The last will take place two to three months after return home in the fall of 2009. All interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The audio files and transcripts will be stored on my personal, password protected personal computer. If you would like, you may receive a copy of your interview transcript. You may also have an opportunity to approve the text submitted for degree requirements and/or publication if desired. If you provide any artifacts such as student work samples, lesson plans, etc., these will be returned to you at the end of the study.

The risks of participating in this study are no more than would be encountered in everyday life. You may choose not to answer any question for any reason. There will be

no penalty if you decide to withdraw or decline participation. None of the other members of the Study Tour, Heifer staff or personnel in your home institution will see the answers you provide to the interview questions. All information gathered will be maintained in a locked cabinet at my home and destroyed after the appropriate time designated by Georgia Southern University. In order to further protect the confidentiality of your answers, you will also be provided a pseudonym. I believe this study will offer participants a beneficial opportunity to process the events of the professional development, and it will offer others suggestions on how to implement future learning.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study at any time, please feel free to contact me, Polly Holder, or my faculty advisor, Dr. Delores Liston by the contact information below. For questions concerning the process of the Institutional Review Board in reviewing all projects involving human subjects, contact the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at Georgia Southern University, IRB@georgiasouthern.edu or call (912) 478-0843.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Ever Widening Circles: Educator Narratives of a Professional Development Abroad

Principal Investigator:

678-873-9189

Polly Stewart Holder

Faculty Advisor:

Holder.polly@gmail.com

Dr. Delores Liston

2005 Whitney Rd.

listond@georgiasouthern.edu

Monroe, GA 30655

P.O. Box 8144

Statesboro, GA 30460

912-478-1551

Participant Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This interview protocol was developed using Seidman's (1998) three interview series. The features of the Seidman interview structure lend themselves well to a qualitative case study and offer a balanced before and after view of informant experience.

Interview I—Houston, TX

Focused Life History

1. Describe your first awareness of hunger/poverty or environmental degradation.
2. Describe your views on those topics now.
3. Tell me a story about any significant events on the journey between your first consciousness and your current understandings about hunger, poverty and environmental degradation.
4. What, if anything, should be an educator's role in transmitting information about hunger/poverty or environmental degradation?
5. Does that point of view differ any from what you believe an individual citizen could or should do?
6. Describe, if anything, you do with students to teach them about hunger/poverty and environmental degradation. (If activities exist) How did you formulate those plans?
7. How do you think that students react to any of the activities that you do?
8. What would you like to achieve or learn during this professional development?

Interview II—At end of trip

Details of Experience

1. Describe some of the most significant events for you during this professional development experience.
2. How do you think the whole trip went?
3. Were there any surprises? How did you address them?
4. Did the trip go as you had anticipated? If not, what was different?
5. Thinking back to our first conversation, do you still agree with how you described your understandings of hunger, poverty and environmental degradation?
6. How do you feel about what individual citizens can and should do now? Is that any different than what you felt before?
7. Thinking back again, describe if/how this trip changed your view of what teachers can or should do with students to address these topics.
8. Are you planning to do anything different with your students this year due to this trip? If so, what?
9. Describe briefly how you might depict this professional development to your friends, family or colleagues back home.

Interview III—Two to three months later in home community

Reflection on Meaning

1. Thinking back to our conversation at the end of the trip, do you still agree with how you thought the trip went?

2. Given what you have said about hunger, poverty and environmental degradation before the professional development and your life now, do you understand those topics any differently?
3. What, if anything, have you done as an individual to address these topics since return?
4. What, if anything, have you done as a teacher? If you have done something, describe how students reacted to the lesson.
5. Describe your perfect “teachable moment” about these issues. What would have to happen for it to occur?
6. How do people react when you tell them about what you have done?
7. What was the most meaningful event of the experience for you?
8. Given all that we have talked about in these interviews, where do you see yourself going in the future with these topics?

APPENDIX F

MICHEL RUBRIC

Heifer International Service Project

In addition to studying about the world's regions, the issues that face these regions, and the relationship between food, hunger, poverty, and environment around the world, you will also be required to contribute to an organization trying to solve some of the world's hunger problems. Your contribution will not, however, be a financial one. Rather, you will use education to help raise awareness about world hunger issues and what one international organization is trying to do.

In order to complete this assignment, students will form small groups (about 3 students) in the fourth week of the semester.

Each group will be assigned an actual profile of a *Heifer International* project. *Heifer International* (www.heifer.org) is a charitable, international NGO (non-government organization) trying to solve hunger, poverty, and environmental problems through local agricultural projects throughout the world. *Heifer International* is probably best known for its unique fund raising strategy. Donors are asked to buy animals such as cows, water buffalo, flocks of chickens, or bees that are then, in theory, given to people participating in local projects. Participants in all of these projects actually do receive animals and, when the animals reproduce, they 'pass the gift on' by donating it to another local family.

Heifer International was selected for this project because their projects stress local solutions to hunger problems. These projects also often try to solve local environmental problems as a means to solve food security issues. In addition, *Heifer International's* approach is fun to learn about and has a natural appeal to all age groups, making it relatively easy to teach people about the organization's mission. Since *Heifer International* is a non-sectarian organization, you should feel free to talk about it and its mission with all groups of people.

Students will meet together, as a group, to learn about *Heifer International* and then they will devise and execute a plan to educate, as a group, others about the organization, its mission, and the profile assigned to the group. There is no one way to complete this assignment. Students might choose to set up an informational table somewhere on campus, meet with a club, or teach a group of school children about *Heifer International*. Your project must include face-to-face contact! You may not

build a webpage as your project. And note, you will receive a higher mark if you do something more innovative and difficult than a simple informational table.

Step 1: Meet with your Group

Heifer groups will be formed during the fourth week of classes. Each group will have about three students in it. You will be given the opportunity to form a group with people you know in class. In the case you do not know anyone, you will be assigned to a group.

Groups will be given a chance to meet during class. A service learning assistant (a student who has already gone through GEOG/INTL 101) will also be assigned to your group to give advice to you. Your group should try to meet outside of class to make plans for your project.

Step 2: Propose a Project

All groups must propose a group project through a formal process. You fill out a form (posted on Blackboard) describing what you are planning to do, when the event will take place, and where it will take place. This form will be reviewed and approved by the student learning assistant and then passed on to the instructor. It then becomes a contract and must be resubmitted if your plans change. If you fail to fulfill the contract, you will lose points on your final grade.

Step 3: Complete the Project

However this assignment is completed, it is expected that you do a quality job and invest some time (at least 5-6 hours/student – delegate tasks and responsibilities as you see fit). Be prepared to document carefully what you did. Documentation is important as your grade will be based largely on how you document your service project. (See the reporting requirements before you start the project!)

Enjoy the project. This is your chance to give service to a charity and get class credit for it. This is your chance to try to change the world!

Step 4: Report

Each group will make a presentation to the class summarizing their activities: who, where, when, what activities, etc. (include in the presentation a count of the number of people to whom you spoke, and a count of the number of gift catalogs you distributed – you will *not* be graded on this, but the statistics will be reported to *Heifer International*). Your presentation must include several photographs of the event, and you may want to document how much time each member of the group spent on the activity.

Your presentation will be compiled with those of the other groups and reported to *Heifer International*.

The final presentation for this project should also be submitted to the instructor electronically.

The final presentation will be made as a short Powerpoint (you may choose to use the Powerpoint template posted on Blackboard).

This assignment is worth 15% of the final grade.

N.B. Students should not contact Heifer International directly about this project. Please do not try to make contact with Heifer International's field offices or even with corporate headquarters. If you have questions that cannot be answered by either your service-learning assistant/advocate or by the instructor, please contact Eliza Penick, Community Relations Coordinator, Pacific Northwest, Heifer International (eliza.penick@heifer.org).

Below is the rubric used for evaluating the *Heifer International* Service Projects. Please note that half-points are given and the instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the score depending on the content of the electronic written report or oral presentation. Not all individuals in each group are guaranteed of the same grade.

Proposal

A proposal must have been submitted for the group to receive a grade.

- 2 points The proposal was submitted in an acceptable form on time. The final project matches the most recently approved proposal.
- 0 The final project does not match the mostly recently approved proposal.

Execution

- 7 points The project was well planned, *creative*, and very effective at teaching a group or a key leader of a group about *Heifer International's* mission. The project used information about both the organization and the case study.
- 6 The project was well planned and effective. It used information about both the organization and the case study.
- 5 The project was well planned and somewhat effective. Case study information was not used.
- 4 The project lacked planning and was only moderately effective.
- 3 The project was unplanned and un-effective but completed.
- 2 or 1 The project was wholly disorganized and poorly executed.

Documentation and Reporting

- 3 points All key elements were included in the presentation (all key summary items, photographs, reflection, etc.). The oral presentation was complete, succinct, and effective.
- 2 One or more key elements were missing in the presentation and/or it was not effectively delivered.
- 1 The presentation was wholly incomplete.

APPENDIX G

HANNAH'S LESSON PLAN

Heifer Cornerstone: Spirituality

***Spirituality** is expressed in common values, common beliefs about the value and meaning of all life, a sense of connectedness to the Earth and a shared vision of the future. Heifer International works with people of all beliefs in our efforts to overcome poverty and hunger. (www.heifer.org)*



Target age group- 3rd

Overview- This is a challenge in the public school, but this lesson centers on class cohesiveness and a sense of community among students. A student learning community is created at the beginning of the school year to create a framework for how students will interact and learn.

Objectives

- Determine essential agreements/ classroom rules
- Work successfully as a team

Materials

- Sticky notes
- Large chart paper
- Group role cards (timer, recorder, captain question, motivator, and materials manager)
- Talking chip/ stick (some object that indicates when a student can speak within his/her group)

Procedure

1. Students will be divided into four small groups (may be more depending on the number of students in the class. There should be no more than 5 students per group).
2. Each person will get a team member card.
3. Each group gets a talking chip and some sticky notes. Students will use the talking chip if they would like to speak. This teaches turn taking within small student groups.
4. In their small groups, they must work together to think about the following questions:
 - How do you like to be treated by others?
 - What makes a classroom great?
 - How can you make sure every day at school is a good day?
5. Students will have five minutes to brainstorm and discuss answers as a group.
6. After the five minutes are up, each student will answer the questions on a sticky note (one answer per sticky) and post it to the appropriate question poster.

7. As a group, the answers are categorized. The teacher will ask the class what category it should go into. For example, for the first question, (How do you like to be treated?) students may write things like good, nice, respectfully, these are all similar answers and should be grouped together.

8. Using the sticky notes allows both the teacher and students to manipulate their answers and place them into categories where they fit.

9. If the teacher has decided to use the term essential agreements, norms, rules, etc. review what that term means. As a class, students make suggestions as to additions to the essential agreements based on the categories. For example, for the first question, they may determine that good does not adequately describe the way they want to be treated, but respectfully may be a better choice. The teacher is carefully guiding the choice of words and phrases to include in the rules.

10. Write statements on the chart paper below the question that they answer.

11. Be sure that all of the statements are clarified and examples are written below. Words like respect hold heavy meanings and need to be expanded upon.

12. Compile the statements from the three question pages, and write them on one piece of chart paper. Post in the classroom and refer to them often.

Extension

For ESOL, ESE, or just as an extension, have student choose one of the rules, essential agreements, norms, and draw an example of what it would look like. These can be posted along with the rules. (This extension addition is courtesy of Cheryl Burghardt)

Assessment

The teacher should be observing the whole process to ensure all group members are participating. This activity is successful if by the end of the activity, there is a set of rules/ essential agreements that both the students and teacher agree upon. These essential agreements/ rules will be posted in the classroom at all times for quick reference.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

Social Studies

SS.3.C.2.1 Identify groups and individual actions

Language Arts

LA.3.3.1.3 Use organizational strategies

LA.3.4.2.2 Record information in all contexts

APPENDIX H

NICOLE'S COMPOSTING LESSON PLAN

Worms & Compost - week 30

CNG (Boys & Girls Club)- Kinder & 1st

- Read the book "The Chicken and the Worm" again to the students. This time pay close attention to how the worm and the chicken help each other.
- Talk about how animals help humans and how humans help animals.
- Give the students their books of Farm Animals. Tell them to first trace each word on the page that is dashed marked. These are the names of the animals. Then allow them to color the pages.
- Exploring the worm bin!
- Bring out the worm bin and allow students to play with the worms. These students already helped make a new home for the worms with new newspaper. Let the kids "check up" on their worms.
- Give each kid a worm to hold if they want.
- Put worms away in their home.
- Allow students to look for worms in the garden and compare them to the worms in the worm bin. Same? Different?
- Count how many worms the kids can find.

Parks & Rec- 2nd, 3rd, 4th

- Start the compost project
 - Currently the compost area is a disaster. All of the bins are stacked in one tall pile and the pile is falling over.
 - Our mission: to get 2 stacks of bins so that the compost is more usable.
 - We must remove all the material from the bins, put it aside to save, remove anything that will not compost (trash), turn the compost, re-stack the bins (3 and 2 high), and replace it all.
 - This may take a few weeks to complete.
- Weeding
 - Explain to students how to weed and why it is important.
 - Pull from roots to get the whole plant.
 - Important because the weeds take the water and nutrients that our other plants need.